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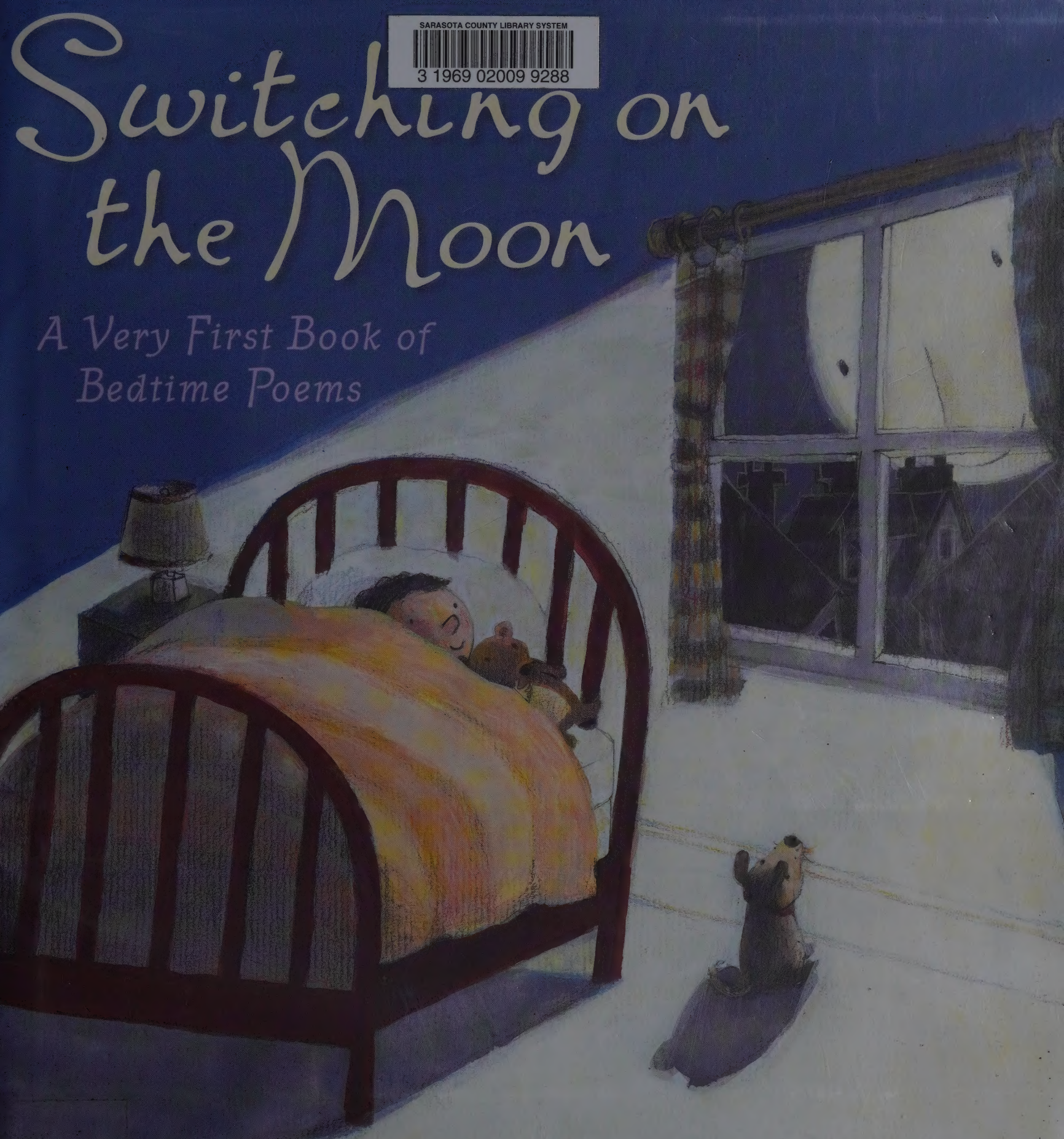
Switching on the Moon

A Very First Book of Bedtime Poems



collected by **Jane Yolen** and **Andrew Fusek Peters**

illustrated by **G. Brian Karas**

From the hoot of an owl to the horns of the city, from children giggling in the bath to the hushed notes of a lullaby, here is an exquisite anthology that captures all the moods of bedtime. Expertly gathered by Jane Yolen and Andrew Fusek Peters, these sixty poems range from old favorites from poets such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Sylvia Plath, and Eleanor Farjeon to beloved contemporary poets like Marilyn Singer, Lee Bennett Hopkins, Roger McGough, and the American Children's Poet Laureate, Mary Ann Hoberman. Beautifully illustrated by G. Brian Karas with richness and whimsy, *Switching on the Moon* is the perfect book to share with a child to usher in a night of sweet dreams.

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THIS
BOOK
BELONGS
TO

_____

Dr. Olek Buła
presented a program for the
KIWANIS CLUB OF VENICE
at its meeting on 1-26-11
The club wishes to express its appreciation by
donating this book in their name to the
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Switching on the Moon

A Very First Book of Bedtime Poems

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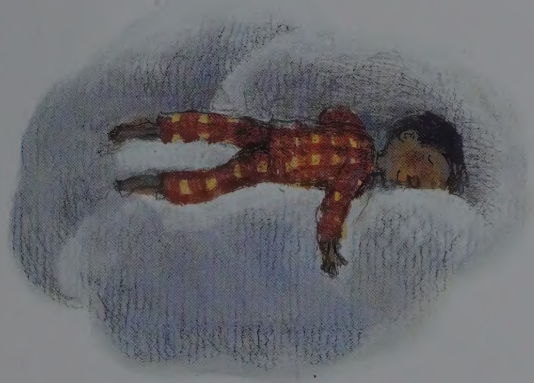
CANDLEWICK PRESS

Contents

Going to Bed ☆ 7

Sweet Dreams ☆ 41

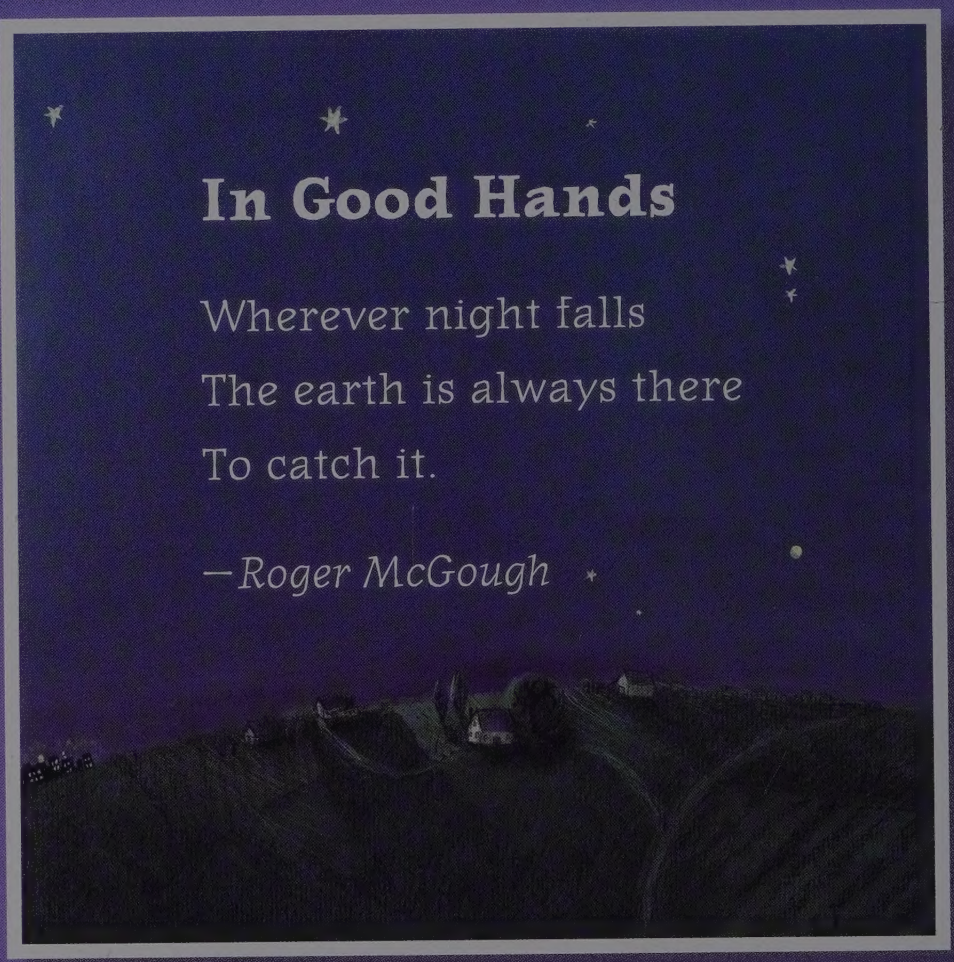
In the Night ☆ 69



Index of First Lines ☆ 92

Index of Poets ☆ 93

Copyright Acknowledgments ☆ 94

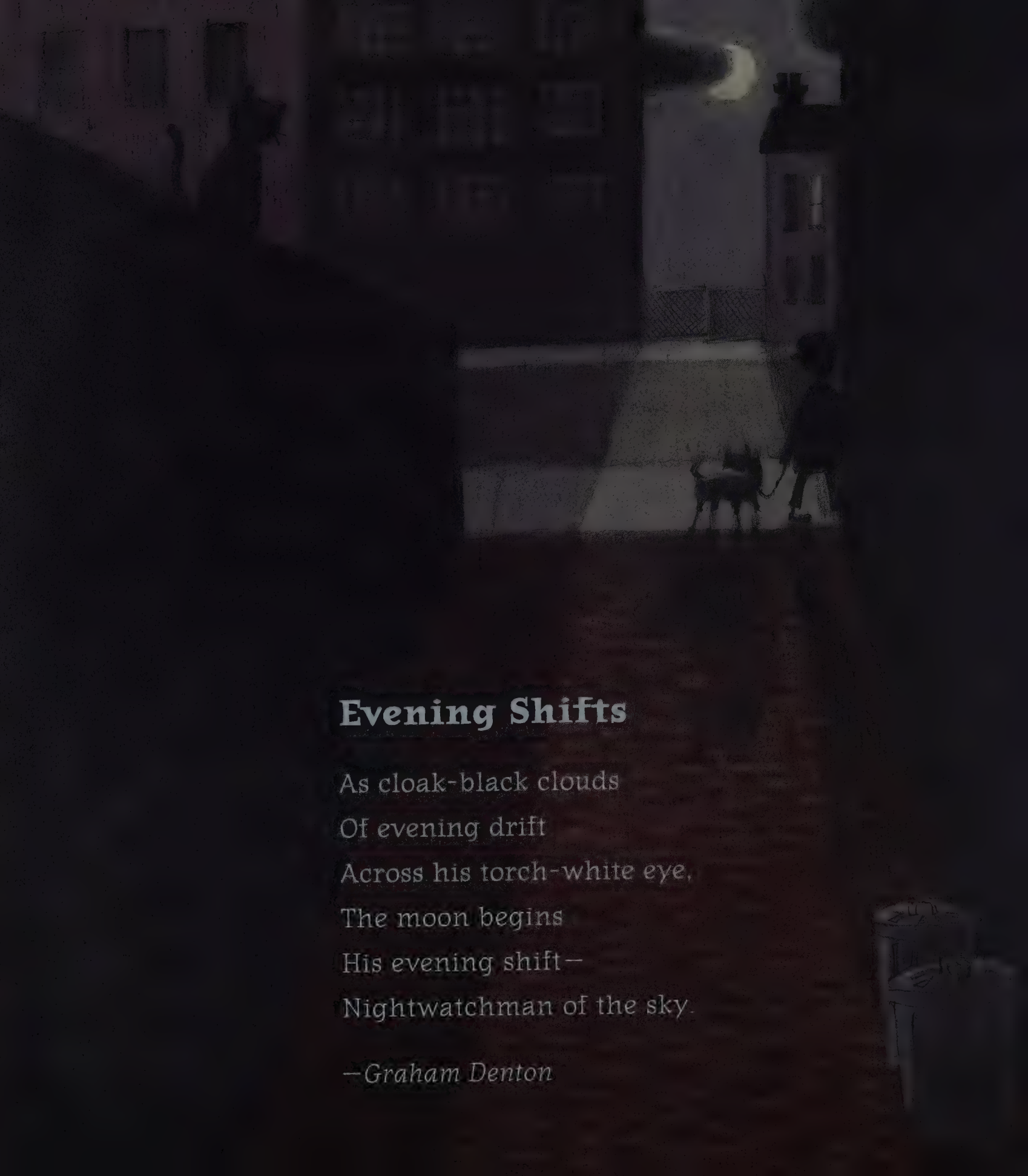

In Good Hands
Wherever night falls
The earth is always there
To catch it.
—Roger McGough

Going to Bed

The Man in the Moon

The man in the moon
Looked out of the moon,
And this is what he said,
'Tis time that, now I'm getting up,
All babies went to bed.

—*Mother Goose*



Evening Shifts

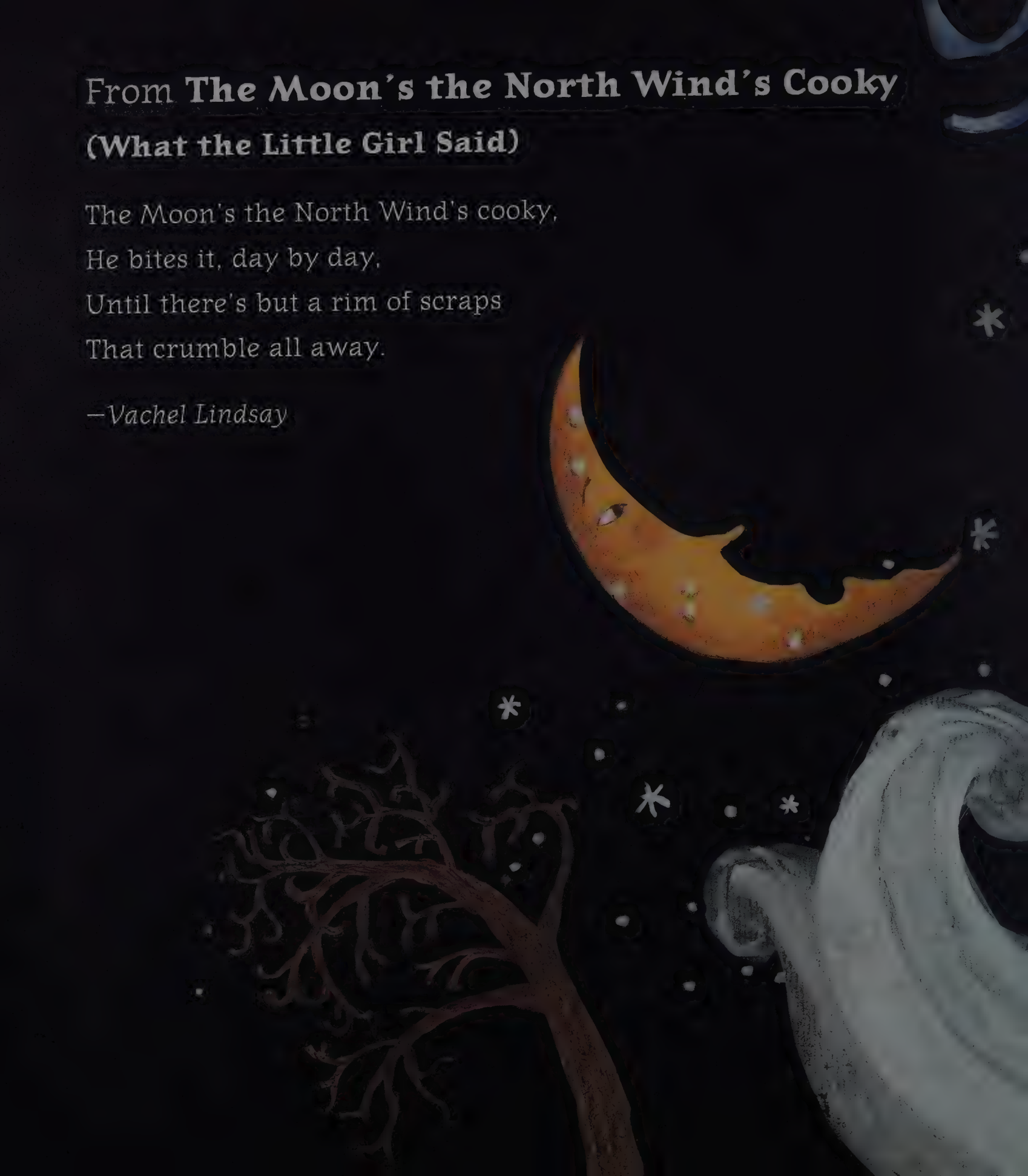
As cloak-black clouds
Of evening drift
Across his torch-white eye,
The moon begins
His evening shift—
Nightwatchman of the sky.

—*Graham Denton*

Tasty

How strange that someone thinks it nice
to eat the moon—a giant slice.
I wonder if he finds it kind
to leave a bit of rind behind.

—*Marilyn Singer*



From **The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky**

(What the Little Girl Said)

The Moon's the North Wind's cooky,
He bites it, day by day,
Until there's but a rim of scraps
That crumble all away.

—*Vachel Lindsay*

The Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

—*Jane Taylor*

The Starlighter

When the bat's on the wing and the bird's in the tree,
Comes the old Starlighter, whom none may see.

First in the West, where the low hills are,
He touches his wand to the Evening Star.

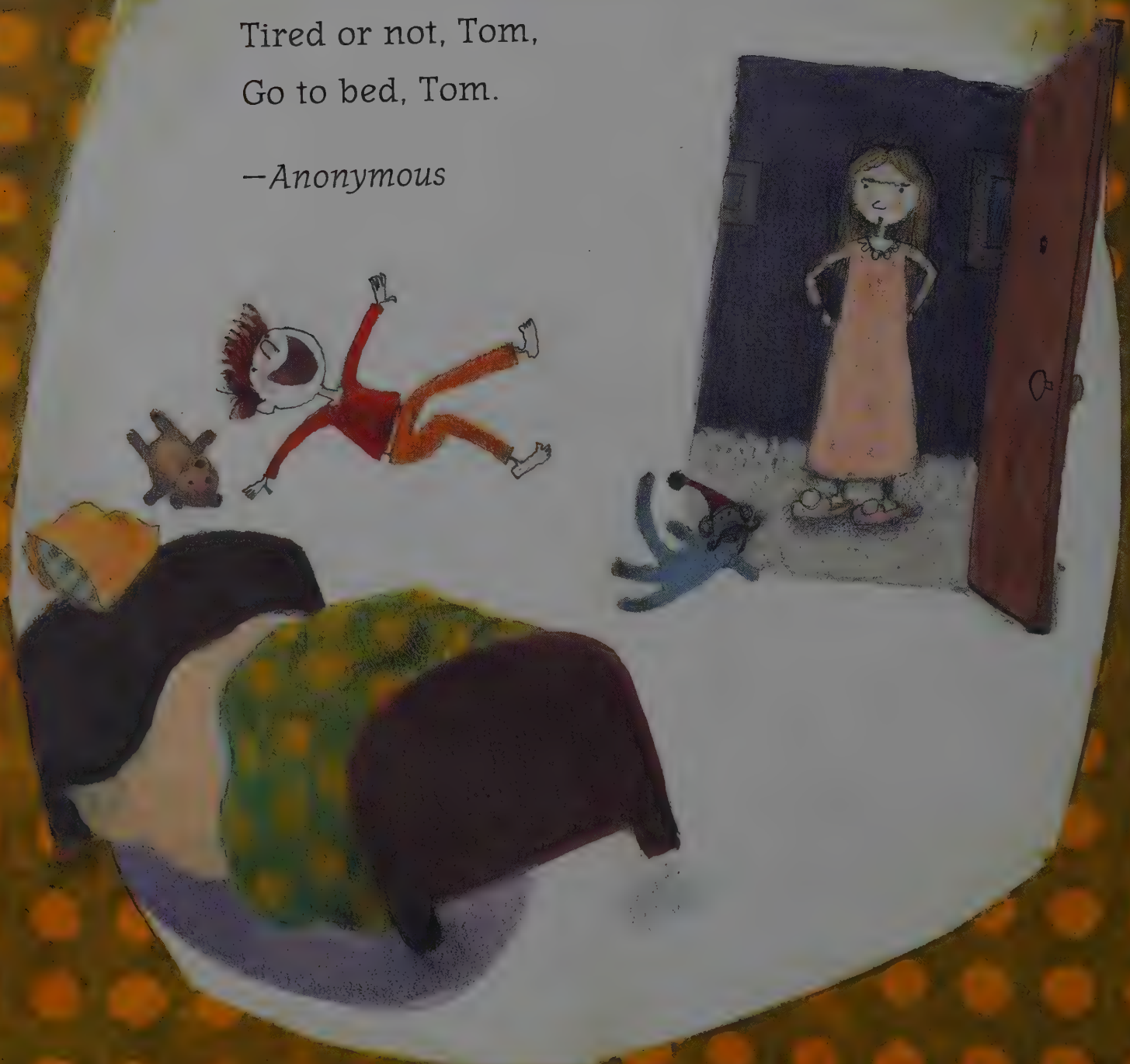
Then swiftly he runs on his rounds on high
Till he's lit every lamp in the dark blue sky.

—*Arthur Guiterman*

Go to Bed, Tom

Go to bed, Tom,
Go to bed, Tom,
Tired or not, Tom,
Go to bed, Tom.

—*Anonymous*



Going to Bed

Go to bed early—
Your hair grows curly.

Go to bed late—
Your hair grows straight.

Go to bed not at all—
Your hair will fall,
And you'll be bald
As a billiard ball.

—*Colin West*

Every Stair Has a Name

Sydney
Bertie
Claribel
Sally
Ali
Ne'er-Do-Well
Creaky
Squeaky
Iggy
Fred

March straight on and into bed.

—*Jill Townsend*

Bathtime!

I've brushed my teeth,
I've scrubbed my knees
and I've really rubbed my neck!
I promise I've washed
behind my ears,
I promise I've done my back!

I've rubbed, I've scrubbed,
I've pummelled,
without a single groan!
I've brushed and splashed,
I've sploshed and splished . . .
I can manage ALL ALONE!

—*Judith Nicholls*

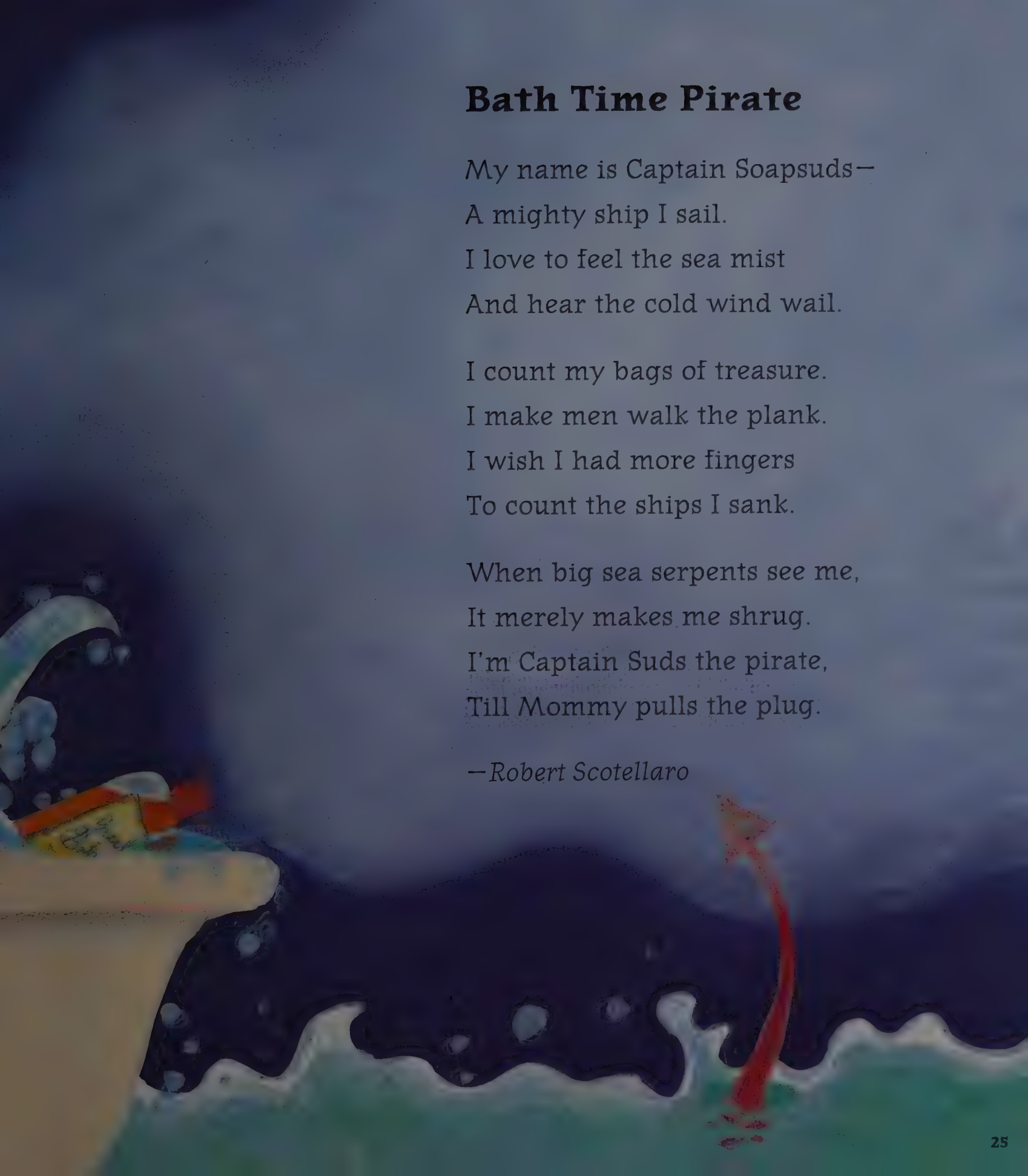
Naughty Soap Song

Just when I'm ready to
Start on my ears,
This is the time that my
Soap disappears.

It jumps from my fingers and
Slithers and slides
Down to the end of the
Tub, where it hides.

And acts in a most diso-
Bedient way
AND THAT'S WHY MY SOAP'S
GROWING THINNER EACH DAY.

—*Dorothy Aldis*



Bath Time Pirate

My name is Captain Soapsuds—
A mighty ship I sail.
I love to feel the sea mist
And hear the cold wind wail.

I count my bags of treasure.
I make men walk the plank.
I wish I had more fingers
To count the ships I sank.

When big sea serpents see me,
It merely makes me shrug.
I'm Captain Suds the pirate,
Till Mommy pulls the plug.

—*Robert Scotellaro*

Bath

Why can't I go to bed dirty?
What's so special about being clean?
I am dirty today. I'll get dirty again.
So why bother to wash in between?

—Jo Ellen Bogart

Bubble Song (for Bath Time)

If you blow
I will grow
to a trembling ball.

I'm a bubble of breath
in a shimmering shawl.

If you lift
I will drift
like a wisp of the air.

Then I'll burst with a gasp
and I'm simply not there.

—*Tony Mitton*

Bedtime Teeth

Scrub them, rub them
Sparkling white,
Swish them, whish them,
Grin goodnight.

—*Lizann Flatt*

Which Brush?

I like a yellow brush,
Mum likes green,
Dad says his white brush
Gets teeth clean.
Ted's is red
And Sue's is blue,
And the baby doesn't care
Because her teeth aren't through.

—*Kaye Umansky*

My Bed

My bed is like a little boat
floating out to sea.
And now it's like an island
with a coconut tree.

My bed is like a racing car
roaring in a race.
And now it's like a rocket
rising into space.

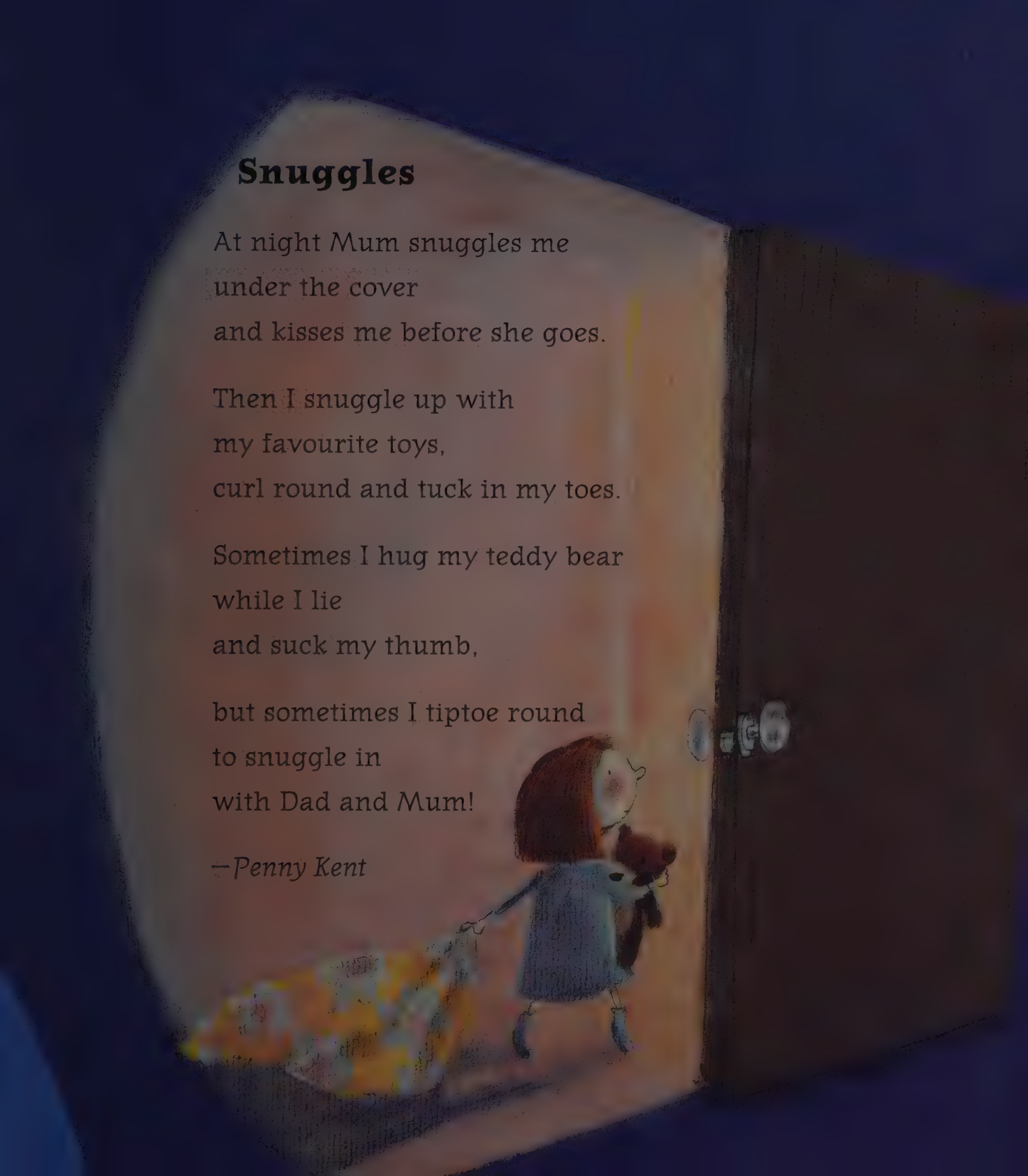
My bed is like a submarine
diving down deep.
And now my bed is just a bed
because I'm fast asleep.

—*Tony Mitton*

Snuggles

Work done
For the day
The sun
Switches on
The moon
Pulls
The clouds
Over its
Head and
Snuggles
Right down
Into the
Cosy bottom
Of the sky

—*Roger McGough*



Snuggles

At night Mum snuggles me
under the cover
and kisses me before she goes.

Then I snuggle up with
my favourite toys,
curl round and tuck in my toes.

Sometimes I hug my teddy bear
while I lie
and suck my thumb,

but sometimes I tiptoe round
to snuggle in
with Dad and Mum!

—*Penny Kent*

Bedtime, Rhymetime

It's bedtime, it's rhymetime,
it's church bells cease their chimetime.

It's bedtime, it's teddytime,
it's pyjamas at the readytime.

It's bedtime, it's tunetime,
it's watch the milky moontime.

It's bedtime, it's blisstime,
it's one more goodnight kisstime.

—John Rice

From *The Bed Book*

O who cares much
if a Bed's big or small
or lumpy and bumpy—
who cares at all
as long as its springs
are bouncy and new.

From a Bounceable Bed
you bounce into the blue—
over the hollyhocks
(Toodle-oo!)
over the owls'
to-whit-to-whoo,
over the moon
to Timbuktoo
with springier springs
than a kangaroo.

—*Sylvia Plath*

Little Bear Sleeping

Moon peeks over a distant hill.
Wind comes rattling as the old wind will.
"Hush," says the moon, "be still, be still—
there's a little bear sleeping on the windowsill."

—*Alice Schertle*

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Go upstairs.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Say your prayers.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Turn out the light.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Say good night.

—*Anonymous*

Goodnight Mummy

Goodnight Mummy
Goodnight Roo
Goodnight Tigger
Goodnight Pooh

Goodnight Mummy
Goodnight Cat
Goodnight Squeaker
(My pet rat)

Goodnight Billy
Goodnight Sis
Goodnight cousins
and Auntie Liz.

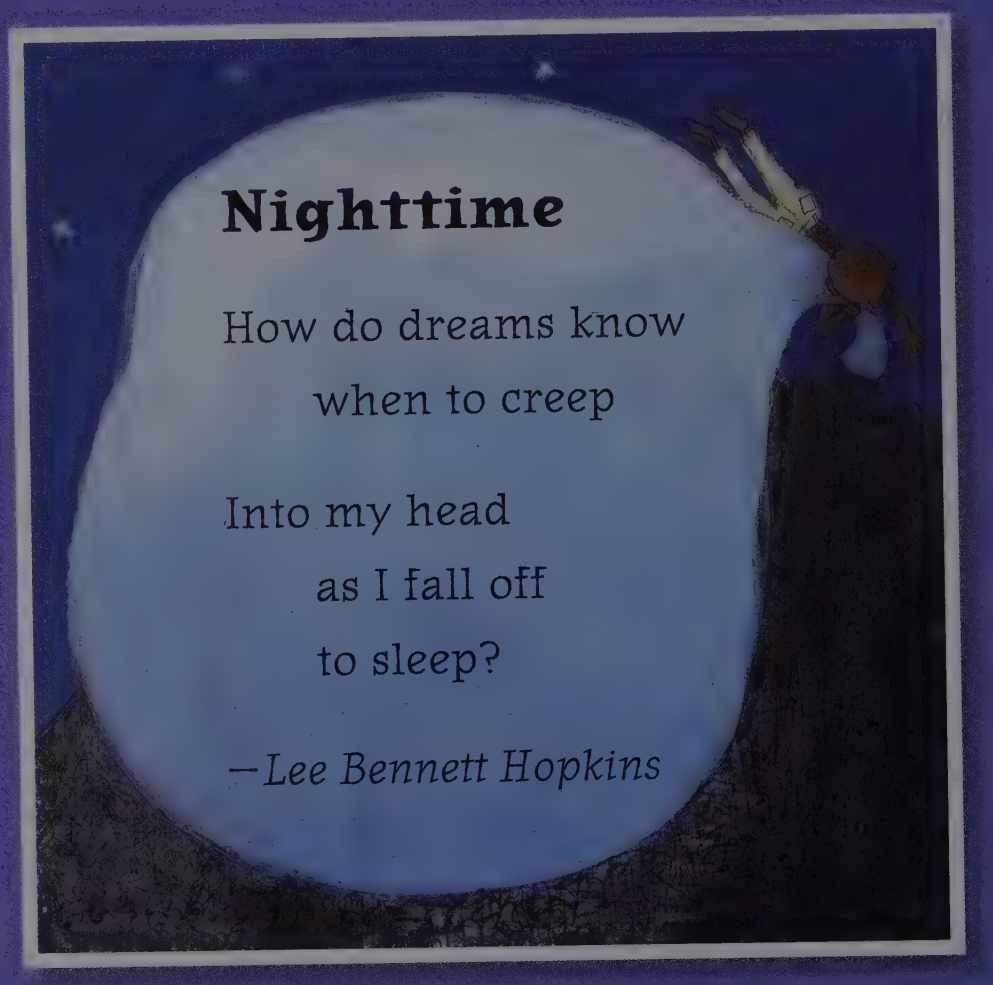
Goodnight Mummy
And all living creatures
Goodnight elephants
Goodnight teachers

Goodnight moths
Goodnight bees
Goodnight ankles
Goodnight knees

Goodnight spiders
Goodnight ants
Goodnight trousers
Goodnight pants

Goodnight Mummy
Goodnight sun
Goodnight every . . .
everyone

—*Roger Stevens*



Nighttime

How do dreams know
when to creep

Into my head
as I fall off
to sleep?

—*Lee Bennett Hopkins*

Sweet Dreams

Mama Bird's Lullaby

Come fluttering
into your nest.
Night is here
it's time to rest.

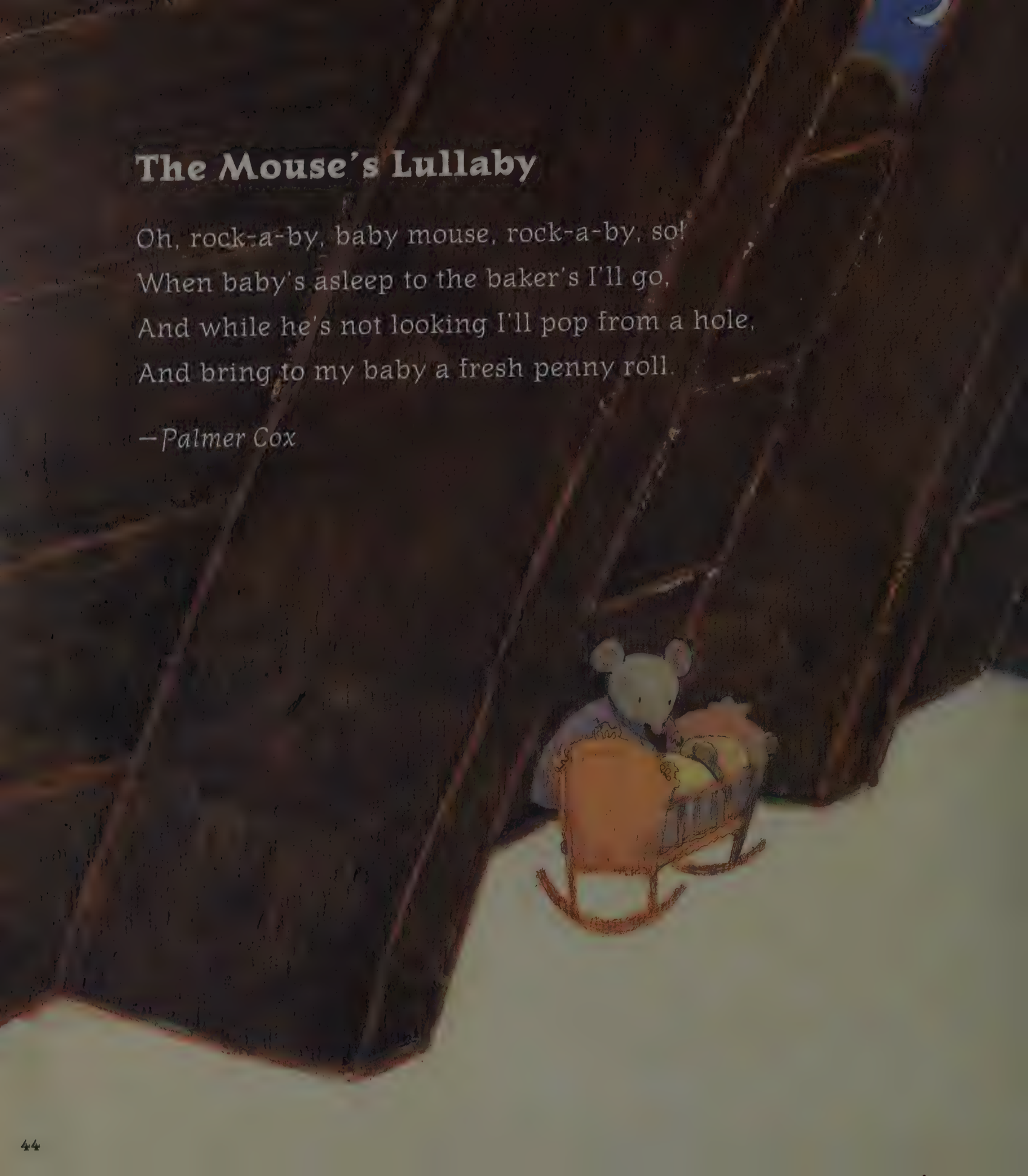
Tuck your head
beneath a wing.
Quiet now.
Let mama sing.

a song to you
of twig and sky.
A tender napping
lullaby.

while you dream
of seed and lawn,
my little bird
of chirp and yawn.

my sleepy bird
so wild and blue,
I sing this lullaby
to you.

—*Rebecca Kai Dotlich*



The Mouse's Lullaby

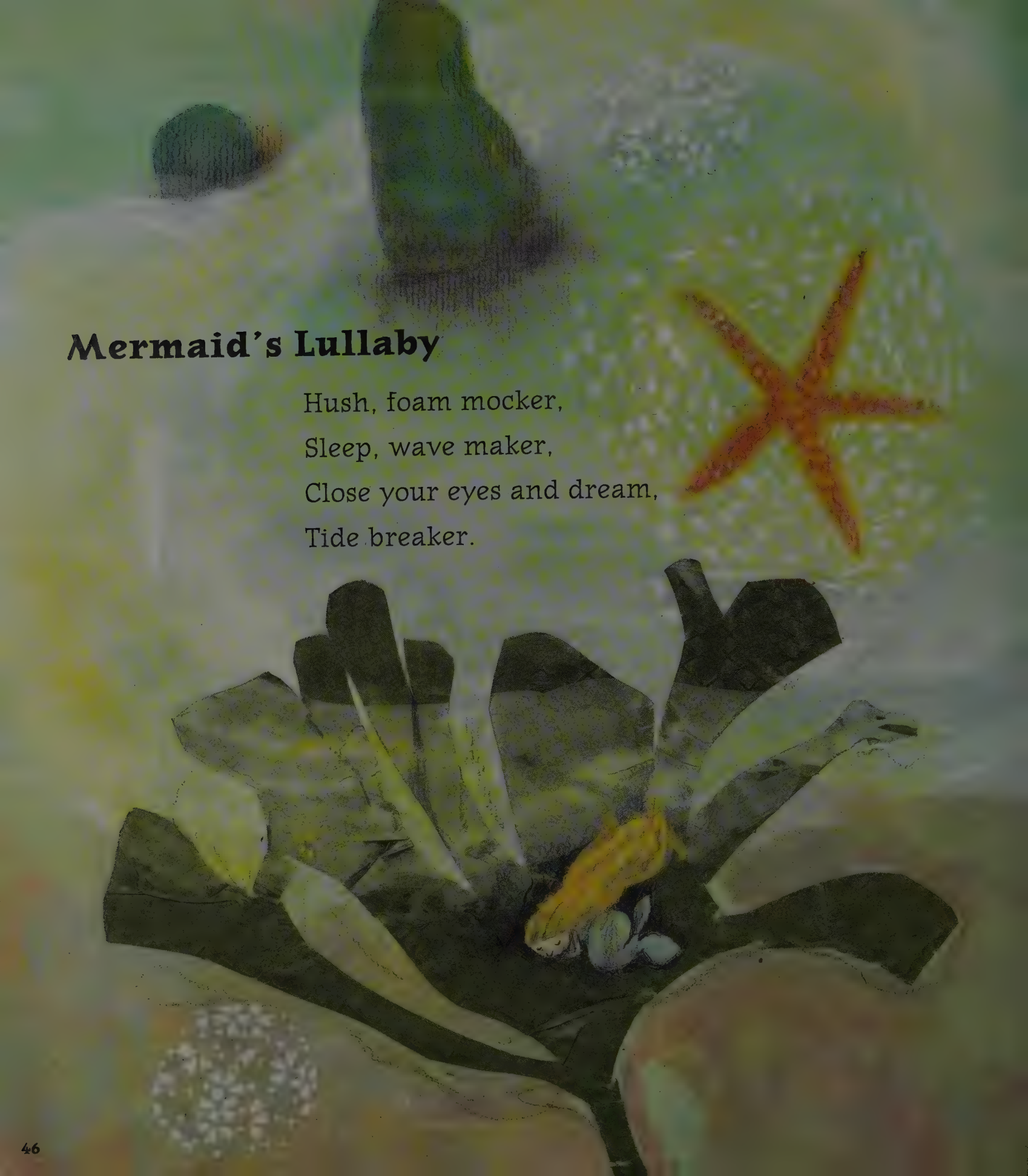
Oh, rock-a-by, baby mouse, rock-a-by, so!
When baby's asleep to the baker's I'll go,
And while he's not looking I'll pop from a hole,
And bring to my baby a fresh penny roll.

—*Palmer Cox*

Switch

Tonight my puppy woke me up
by climbing in my bed.
His cushion looks so comfortable
I'll sleep on it instead.
If he dreams of ice cream cones
and trips to outer space,
will I dream of chewy bones
and finding cats to chase?

—*Marilyn Singer*



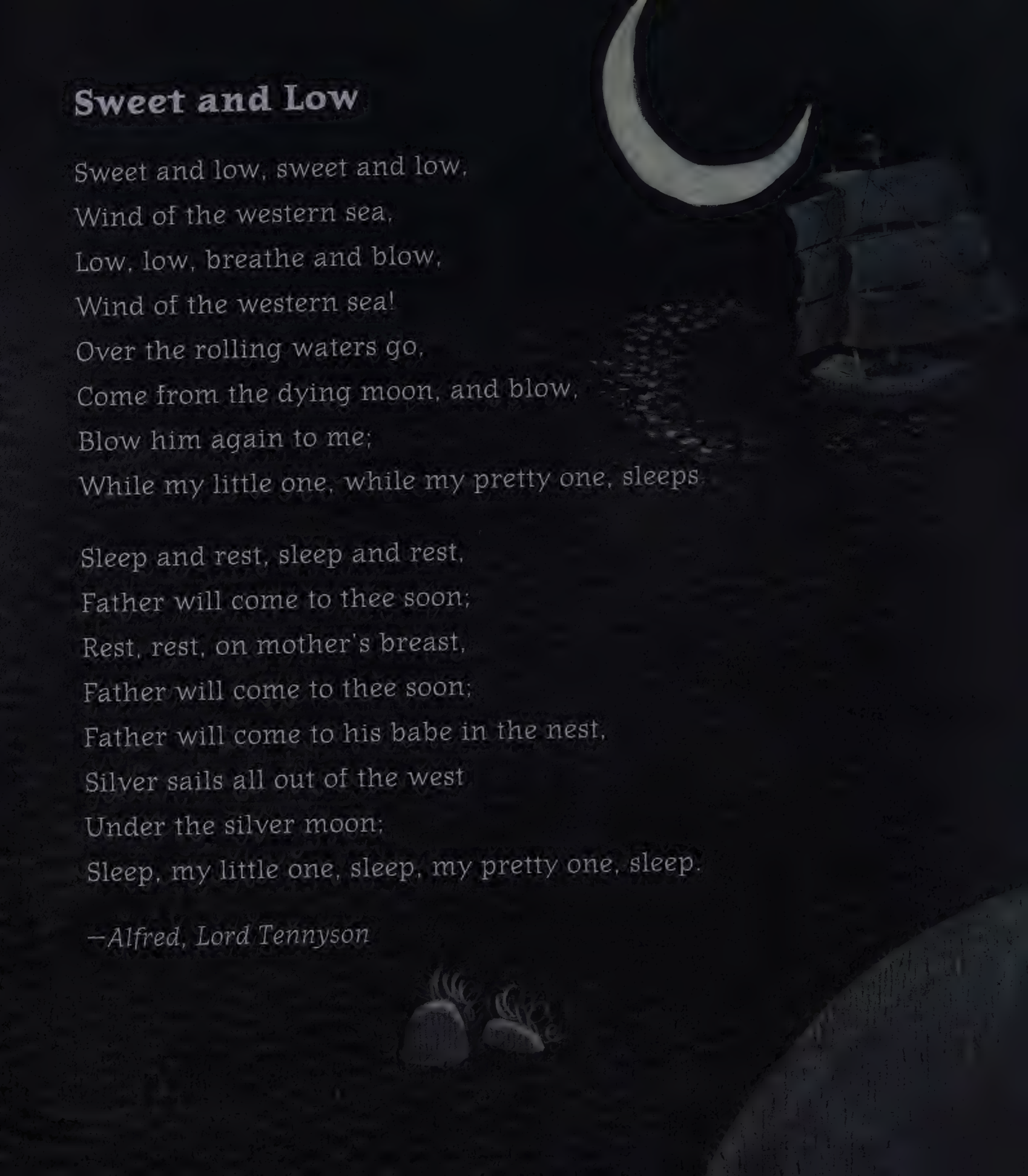
Mermaid's Lullaby

Hush, foam mocker,
Sleep, wave maker,
Close your eyes and dream,
Tide breaker.

Waves will rock you,
Whales will sing you,
Starfish a night-light
Will bring you.

Hush, deep diver,
Shush, shell keeper,
Be your finny mother's
Sleeper.

—*Jane Yolen*



Sweet and Low

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Night Noises in the City

In the country
Things are quiet.
In the city
Noise runs riot.

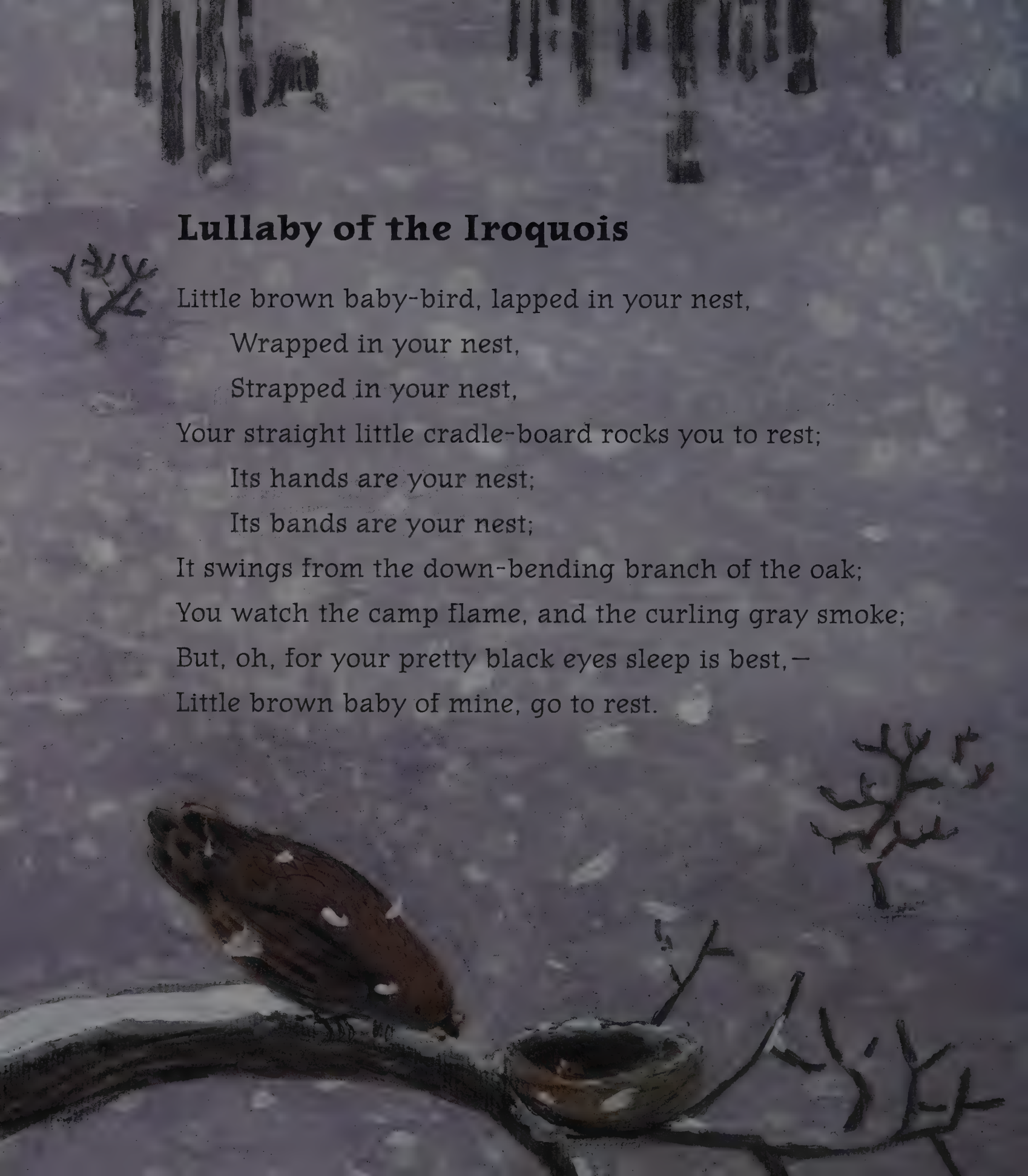
Car horns beep.
Buses boom.
People shout.
Trucks zoom-zoom.

Fire engine
Siren wails,
Someone whistles
Taxi hails.

Garbage truck
Churns crackety-crack.
Subway rails
Go clickety-clack.

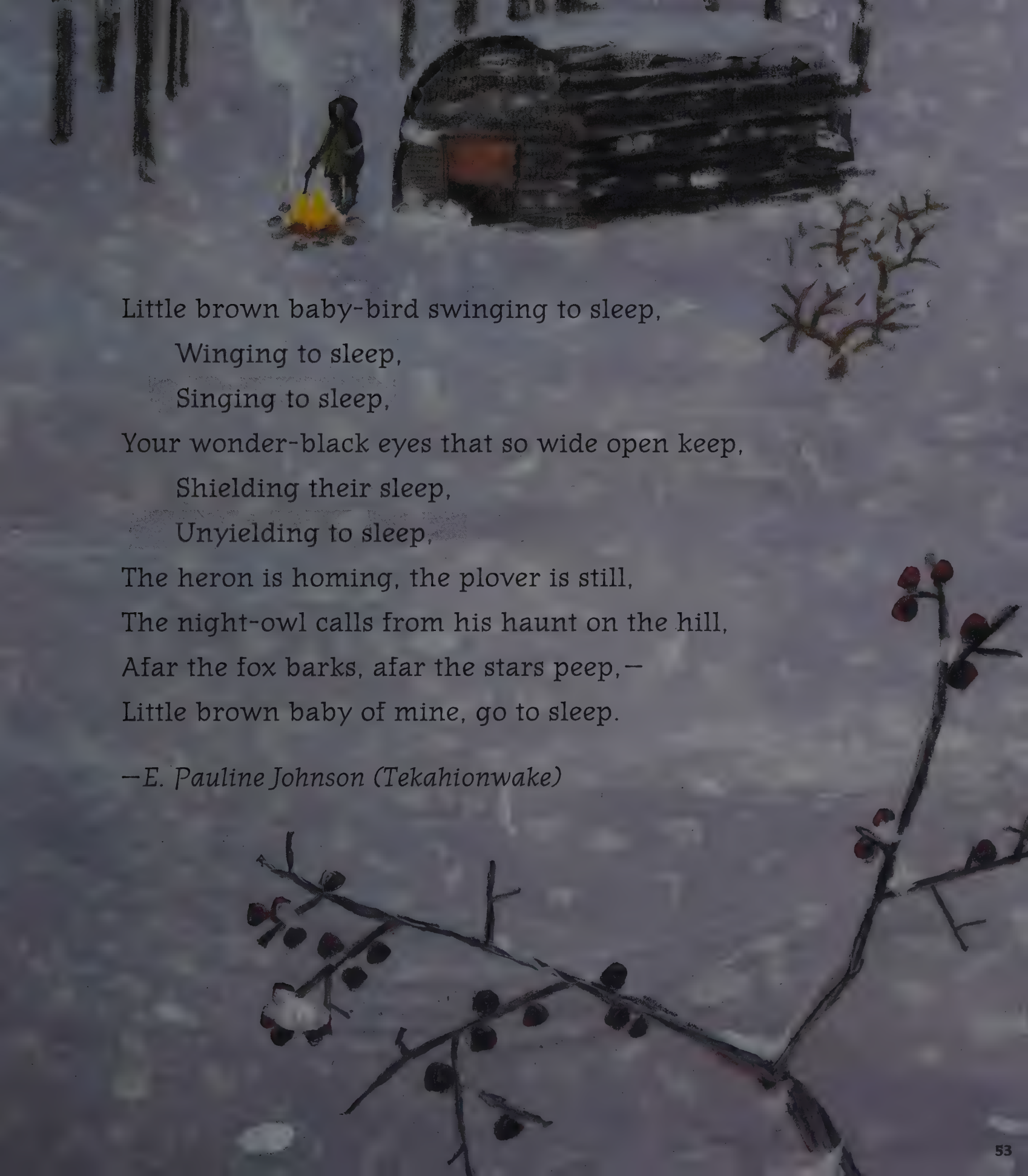
Close your eyes
And use your ears.
And hear what
A city sleeper hears.

—*Jane Yolen*



Lullaby of the Iroquois

Little brown baby-bird, lapped in your nest,
Wrapped in your nest,
Strapped in your nest,
Your straight little cradle-board rocks you to rest;
Its hands are your nest;
Its bands are your nest;
It swings from the down-bending branch of the oak;
You watch the camp flame, and the curling gray smoke;
But, oh, for your pretty black eyes sleep is best,—
Little brown baby of mine, go to rest.



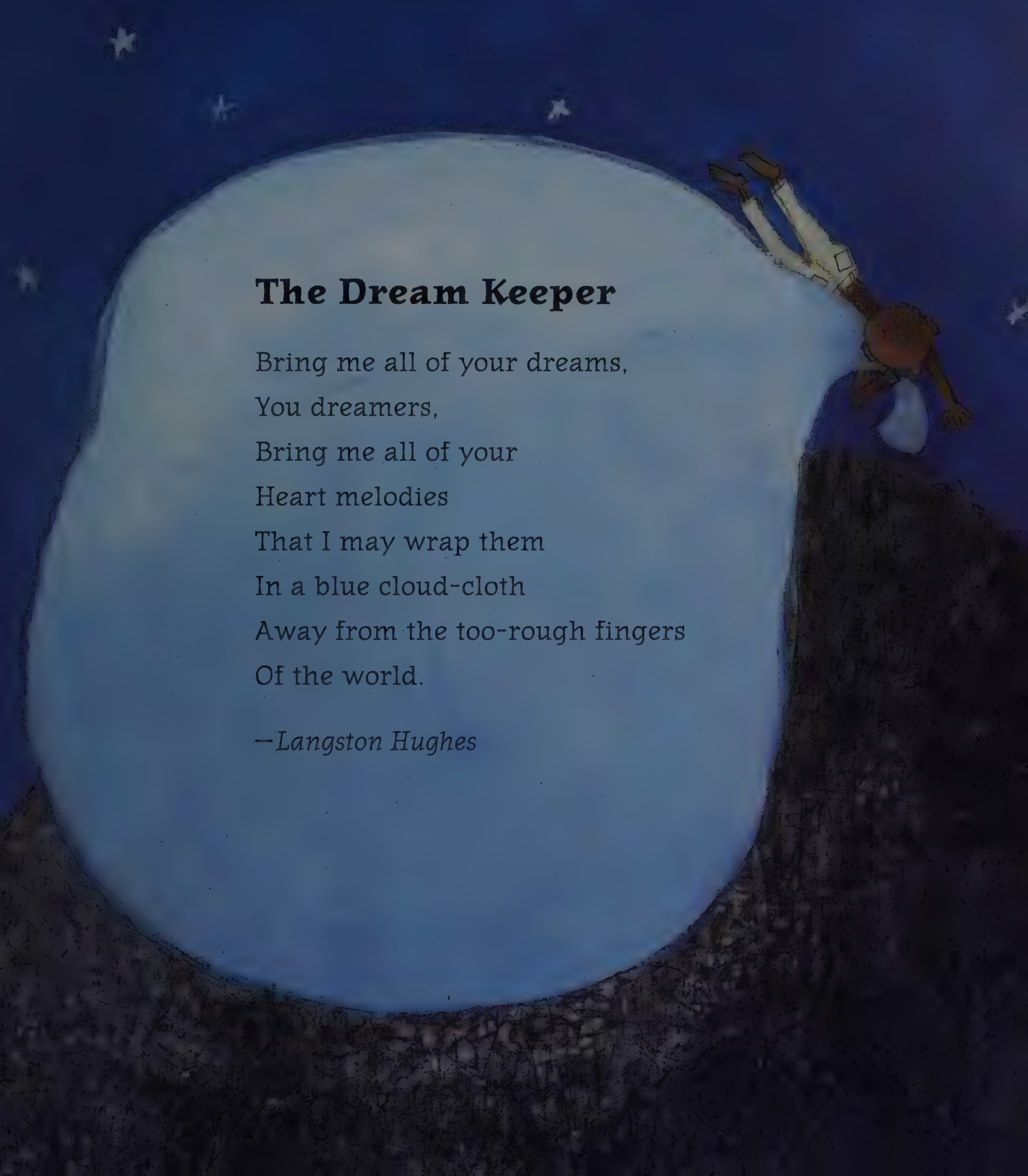
Little brown baby-bird swinging to sleep,
Winging to sleep,
Singing to sleep,
Your wonder-black eyes that so wide open keep,
Shielding their sleep,
Unyielding to sleep,
The heron is homing, the plover is still,
The night-owl calls from his haunt on the hill,
Afar the fox barks, afar the stars peep,—
Little brown baby of mine, go to sleep.

—E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)

From **Dream Angus**

Dreams to sell, fine dreams to sell,
Angus is coming with dreams to sell.
Hush now wee bairnie and sleep without fear,
For Angus will bring you a dream, my dear.

—*George Churchill*



The Dream Keeper

Bring me all of your dreams,
You dreamers,
Bring me all of your
Heart melodies
That I may wrap them
In a blue cloud-cloth
Away from the too-rough fingers
Of the world.

—*Langston Hughes*

From *The Cozy Book*

And now the cozy day is gone
And now the cozy book is read
Of all the cozy things there are
The coziest of all is bed
So go to sleep, sweet sleepyhead
Just curl up snug and shut the light
A goodnight hug, a kiss goodnight

Sweet thoughts
Sweet dreams
Sleep deep
Sleep tight

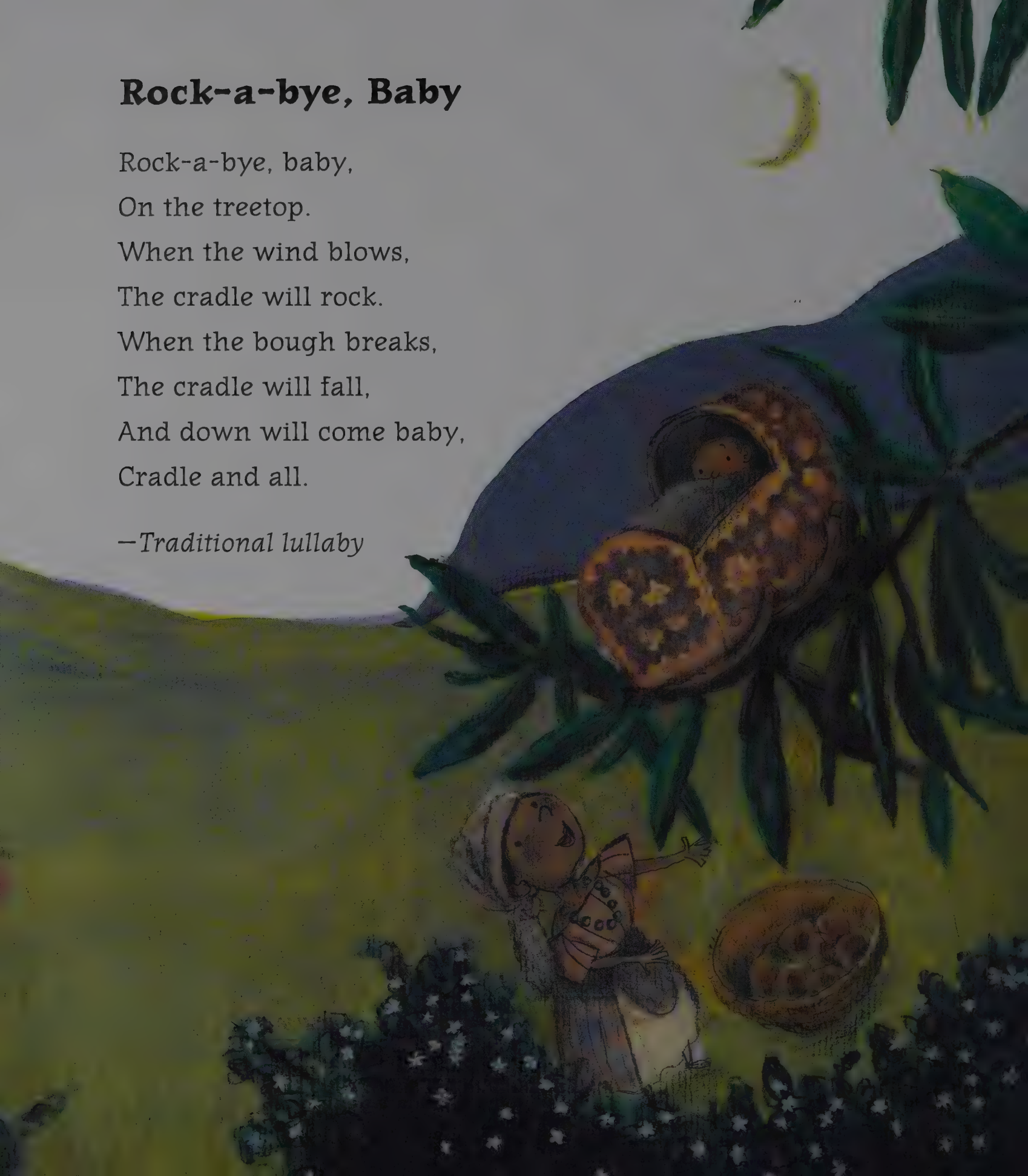
Droopy
Drifty
Drowsy
Dozy
Dream of everything that's cozy

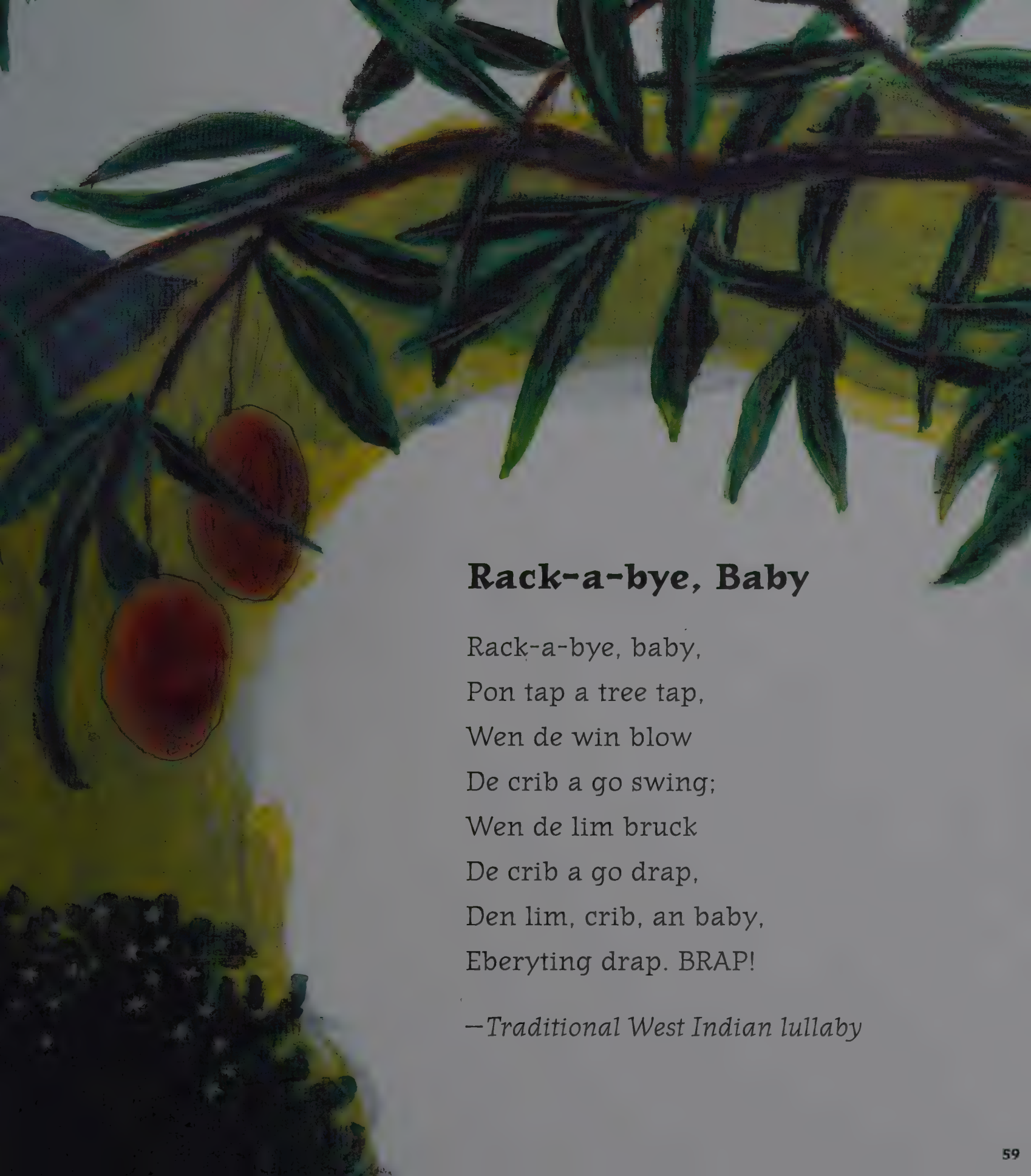
—*Mary Ann Hoberman*

Rock-a-bye, Baby

Rock-a-bye, baby,
On the treetop.
When the wind blows,
The cradle will rock.
When the bough breaks,
The cradle will fall,
And down will come baby,
Cradle and all.

—*Traditional lullaby*

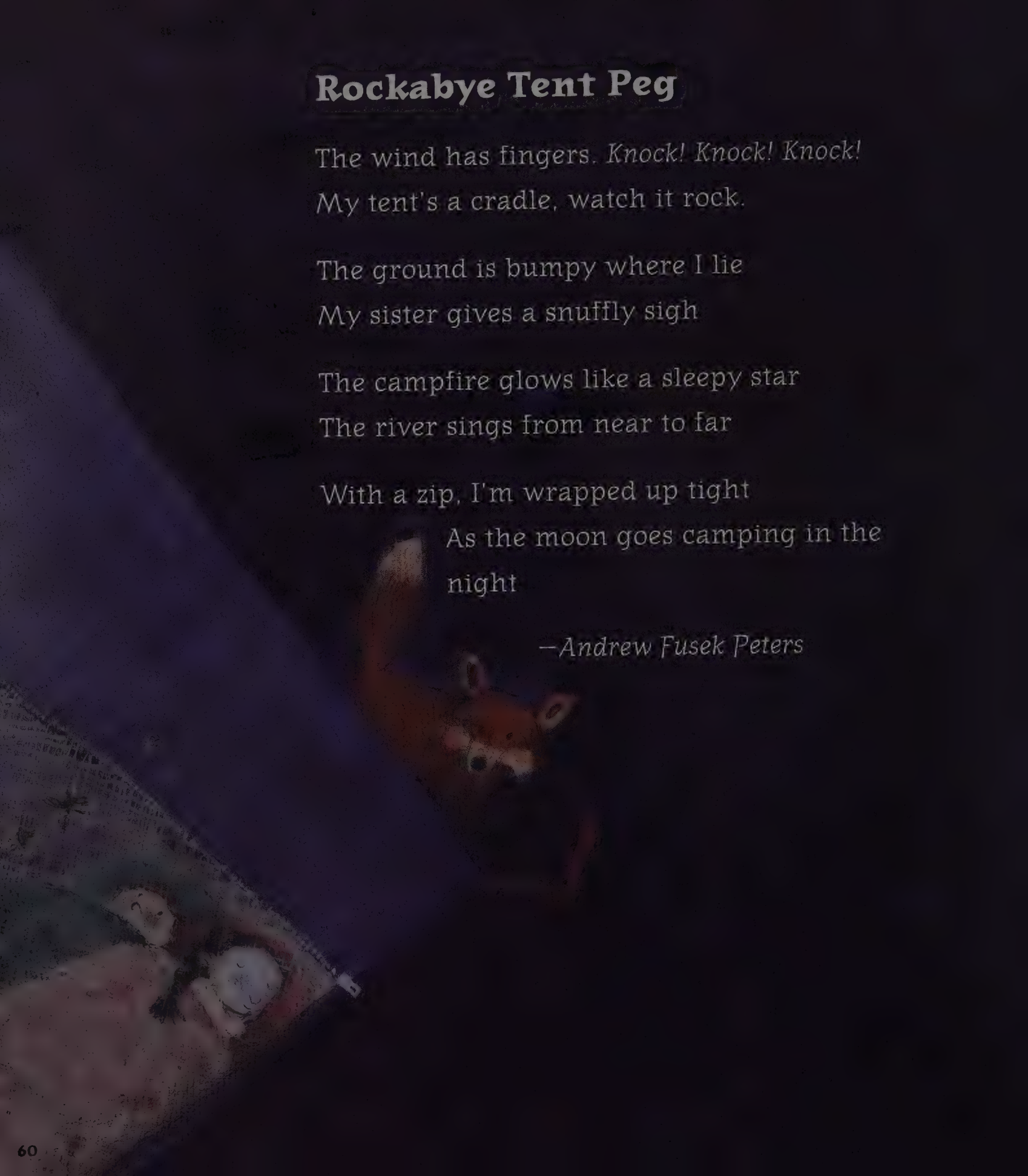




Rack-a-bye, Baby

Rack-a-bye, baby,
Pon tap a tree tap,
Wen de win blow
De crib a go swing;
Wen de lim bruck
De crib a go drap,
Den lim, crib, an baby,
Eberyting drap. BRAP!

—*Traditional West Indian lullaby*



Rockabye Tent Peg

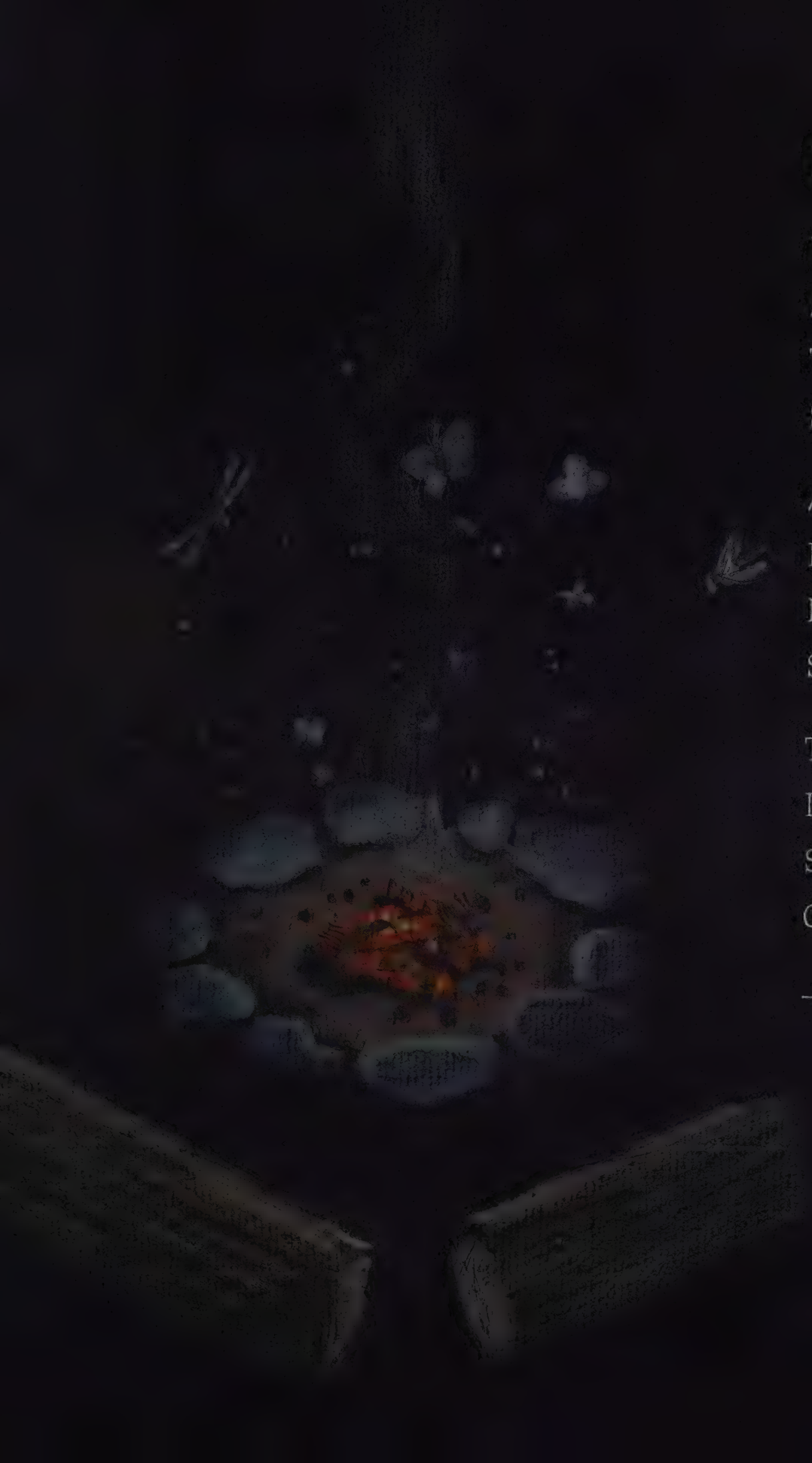
The wind has fingers. *Knock! Knock! Knock!*
My tent's a cradle, watch it rock.

The ground is bumpy where I lie
My sister gives a snuffly sigh

The campfire glows like a sleepy star
The river sings from near to far

With a zip, I'm wrapped up tight
As the moon goes camping in the night

—*Andrew Fusek Peters*



Night Song

When the sun has set
And night has come,
The insect chorus
Starts to hum.

And nothing else
Is there to hear,
But the insect voices
Soft and clear.

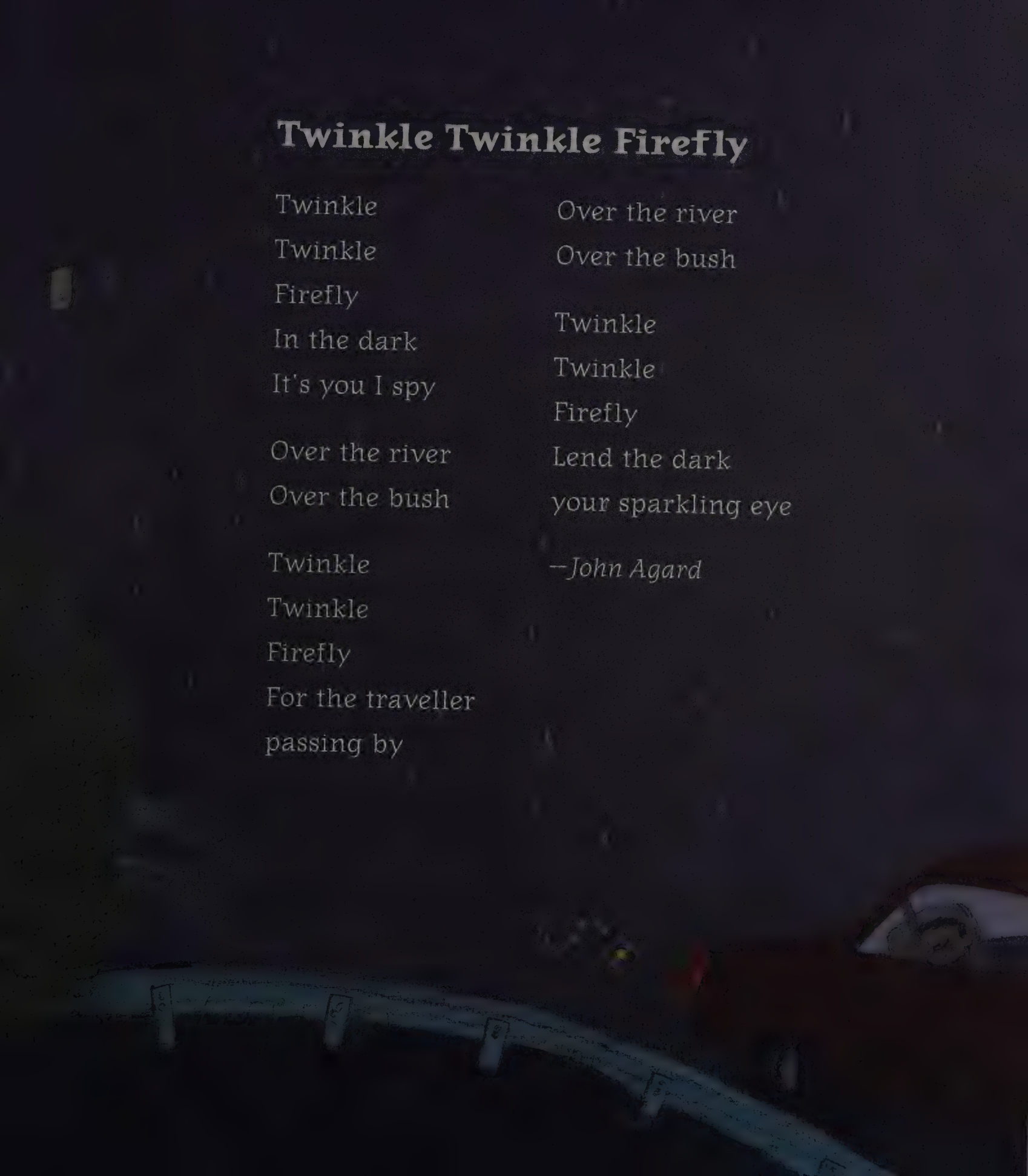
The insects hum
In sweet delight,
Singing their praises
Of the night.

—*Leland B. Jacobs*

Sleeping Outdoors

Under the dark is a star,
Under the star is a tree,
Under the tree is a blanket,
And under the blanket is me.

—*Marchette Chute*



Twinkle Twinkle Firefly

Twinkle
Twinkle
Firefly
In the dark
It's you I spy

Over the river
Over the bush

Twinkle
Twinkle
Firefly
For the traveller
passing by

Over the river
Over the bush

Twinkle
Twinkle
Firefly
Lend the dark
your sparkling eye

—*John Agard*

Wordless Words

Wordless words.
A tuneless tune.
Blow out the sun.
Draw down the shade.
Turn off the dog.
Snap on the stars.
Unwrap the moon.
Wish leafy, sleeping trees good night
And listen
To the day shut tight.

—*Karla Kuskin*

Bedtime Chant for the Tooth Fairy

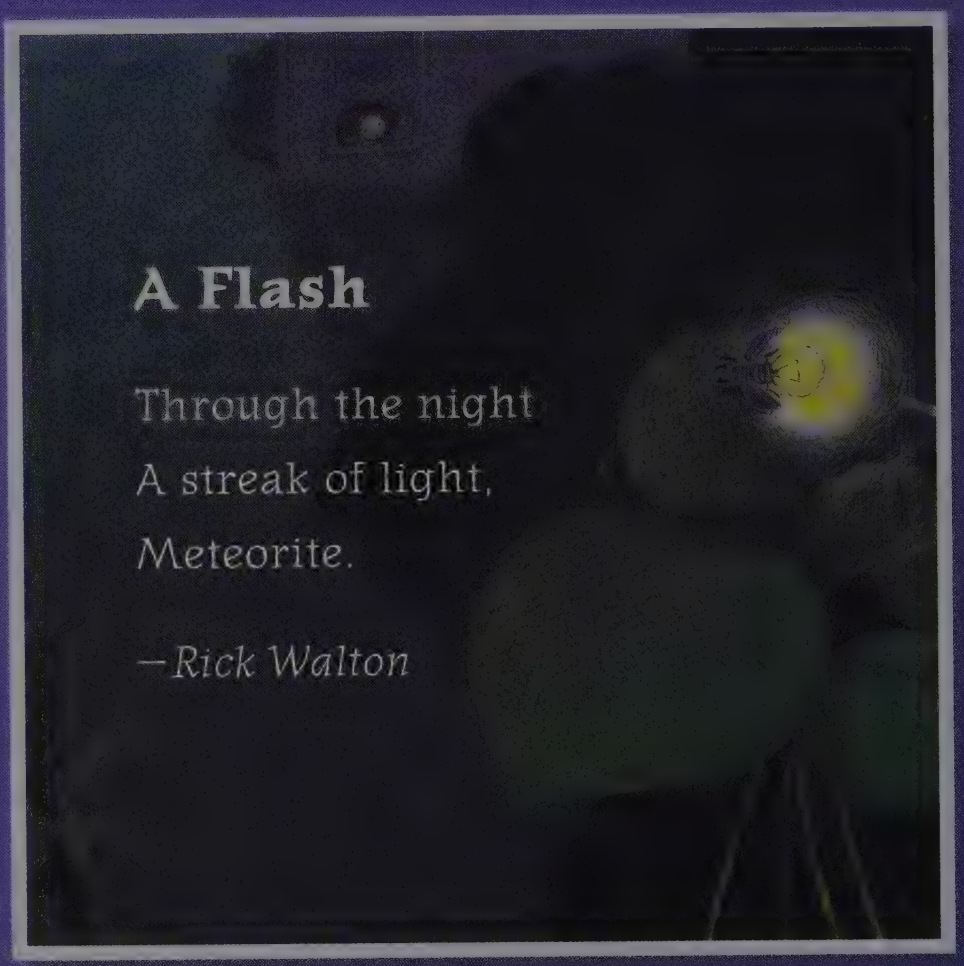
Oak, ash, weeping willow,
Lay your tooth beneath the pillow.

Rock, pebble, grain of sand,
Set your sail for sleepy land.

Ember, flame, fire-bright,
Fairy footsteps in the night.

Robin redbreast, swallow, swift,
Wake to find a silver gift.

—*Polly Peters*

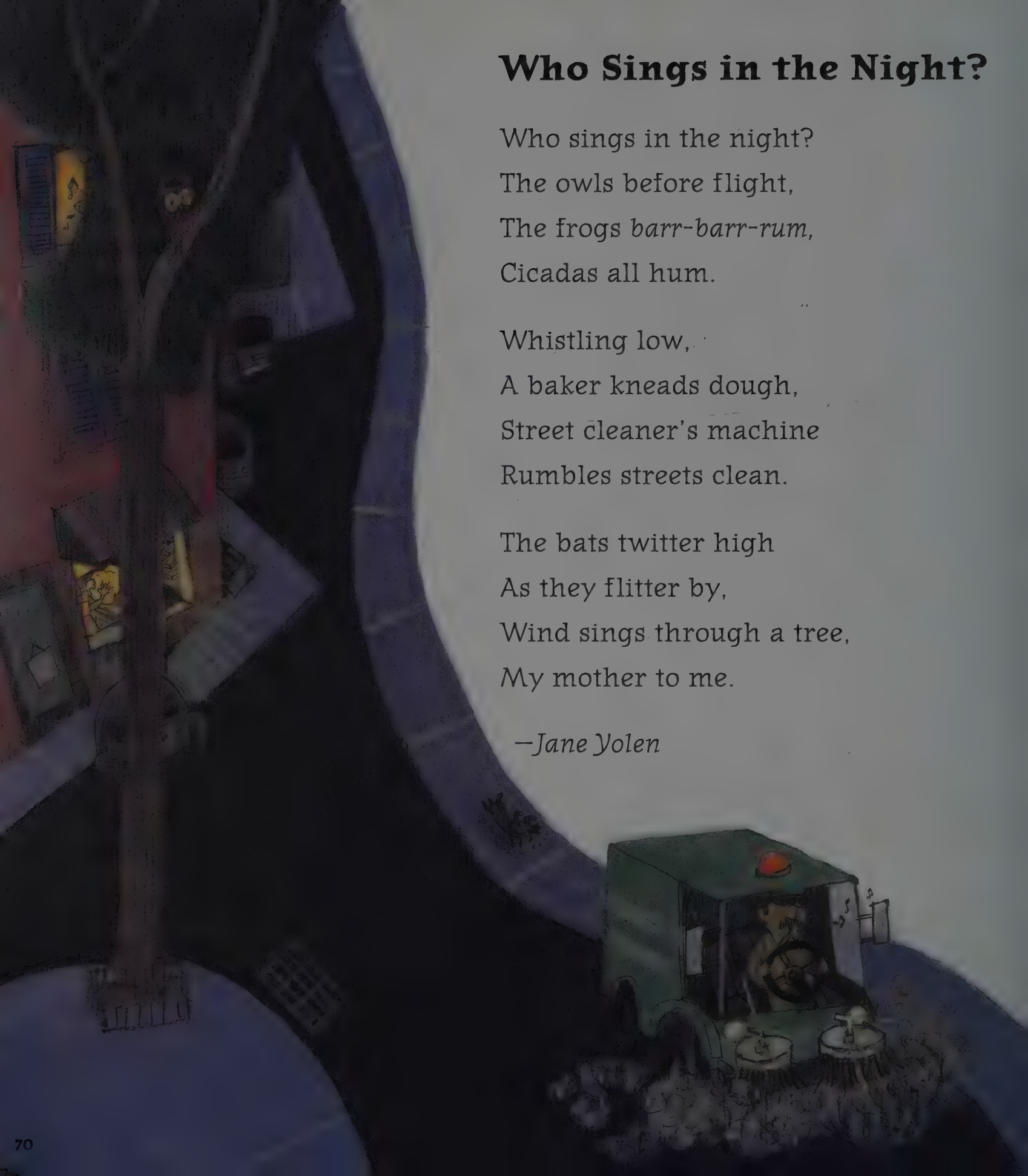


A Flash

Through the night
A streak of light,
Meteorite.

—*Rick Walton*

In the Night



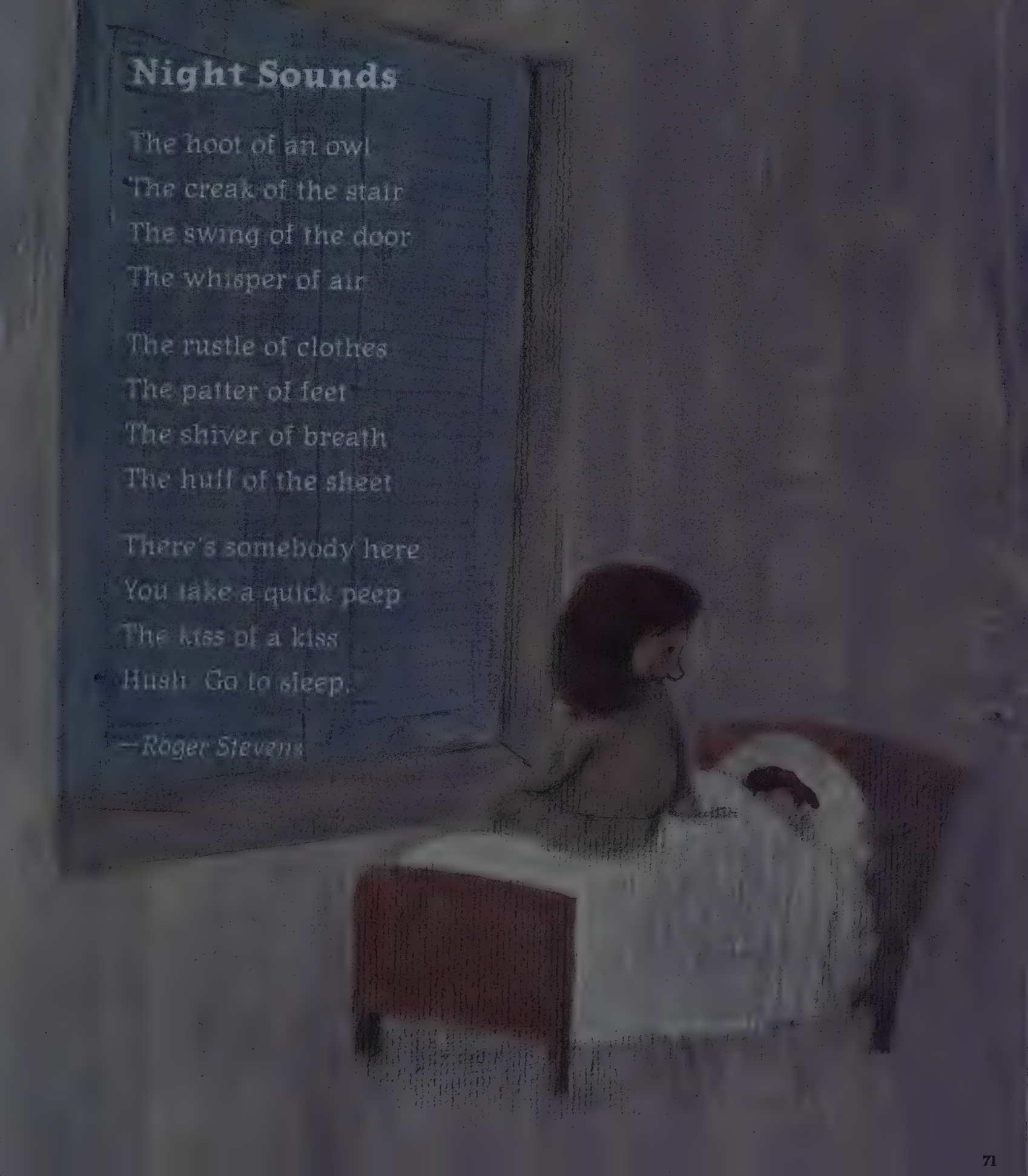
Who Sings in the Night?

Who sings in the night?
The owls before flight,
The frogs *barr-barr-rum,*
Cicadas all hum.

Whistling low,
A baker kneads dough,
Street cleaner's machine
Rumbles streets clean.

The bats twitter high
As they flitter by,
Wind sings through a tree,
My mother to me.

—*Jane Yolen*



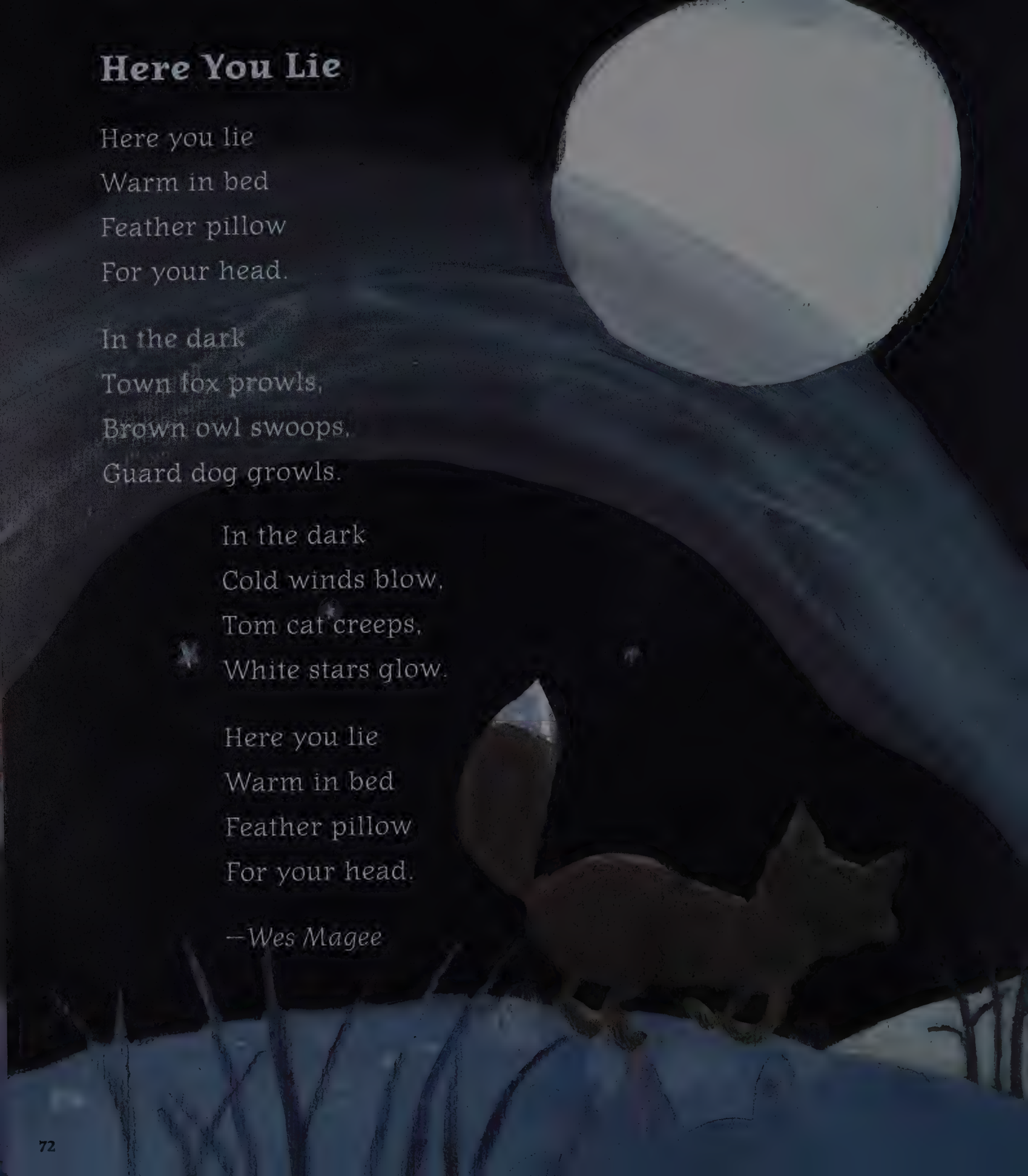
Night Sounds

The hoot of an owl
The creak of the stair
The swing of the door
The whisper of air

The rustle of clothes
The patter of feet
The shiver of breath
The huff of the sheet

There's somebody here
You take a quick peep
The kiss of a kiss
Hush! Go to sleep.

—*Roger Stevens*



Here You Lie

Here you lie
Warm in bed
Feather pillow
For your head.

In the dark
Town fox prowls,
Brown owl swoops,
Guard dog growls.

In the dark
Cold winds blow,
Tom cat creeps,
White stars glow.

Here you lie
Warm in bed
Feather pillow
For your head.

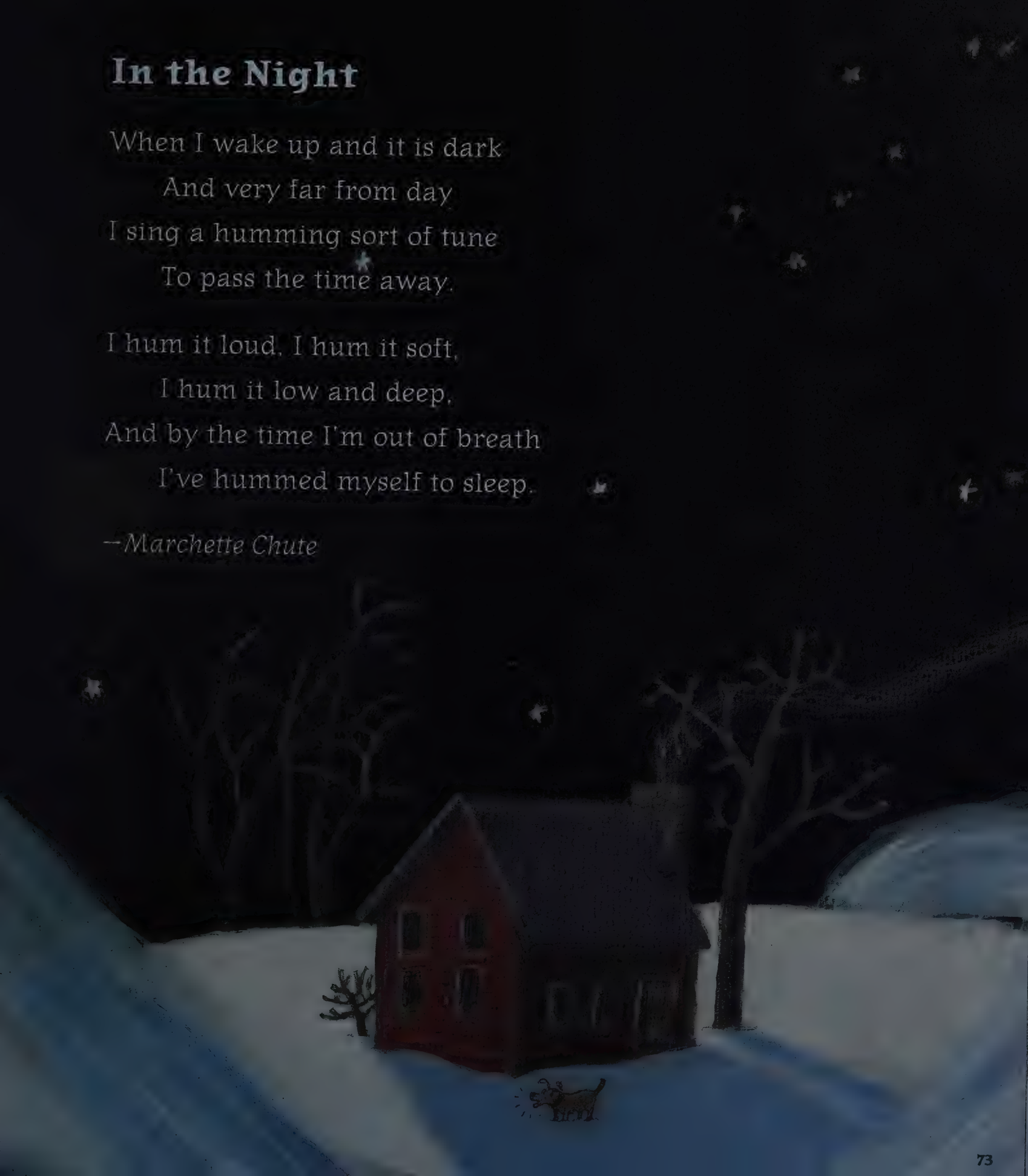
—*Wes Magee*

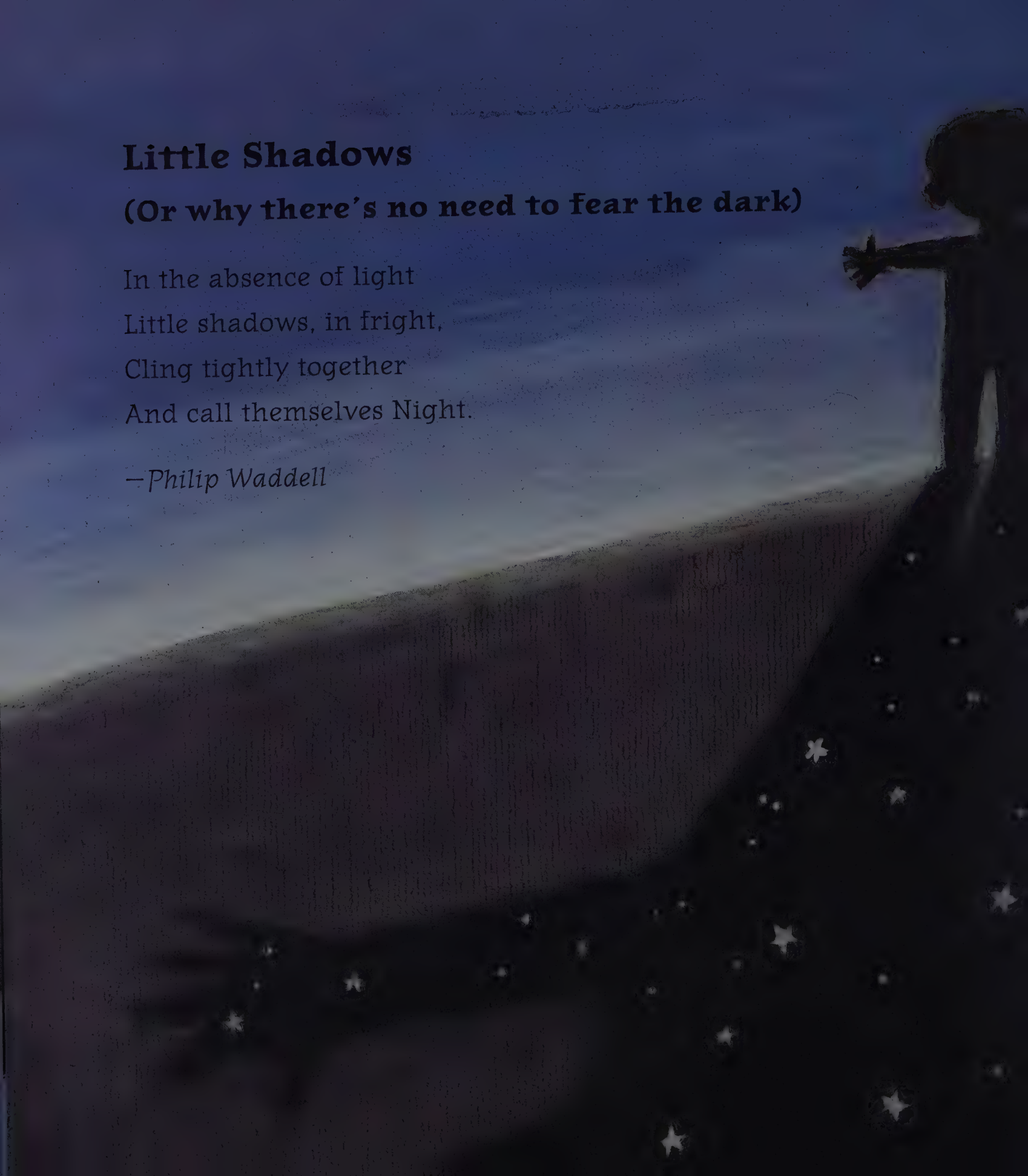
In the Night

When I wake up and it is dark
And very far from day
I sing a humming sort of tune
To pass the time away.

I hum it loud. I hum it soft,
I hum it low and deep.
And by the time I'm out of breath
I've hummed myself to sleep.

—*Marchette Chute*





Little Shadows

(Or why there's no need to fear the dark)

In the absence of light
Little shadows, in fright,
Cling tightly together
And call themselves Night.

—*Philip Waddell*

The Bat

The bat is batty as can be.
It sleeps all day in cave or tree,
And when the sun sets in the sky,
It rises from its rest to fly.
All night this mobile mammal mugs
A myriad of flying bugs.
And after its night out on the town,
The batty bat sleeps

Upside down.

—*Douglas Florian*

Stars with Wings

Sometimes it seems
like all the stars
have fallen
from the skies,
but when I see
the stars have wings
I know they're fireflies.

—*Betsy Franco*

Wonder

I wonder at the stars by night
These little chandeliers of light
I wonder if in turn they see
The tiny spark that makes up me?

—*Andrew Fusek Peters*

Night Light

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
I know what you really are:
a blinking bug in flickering flight,
lighting up my yard tonight,
in the treetops, near the ground,
winking, flashing all around.
I watch you and I'm mystified—
how did you get that bulb inside?

—*Cynthia Cotten*

Shepherd's Night Count

One ewe,
One ram,
Two sheep,
One lamb,
Three sheep,
One flock,
Four gates,
One lock,
Five folds,
One light,
Good dog,
Good night.

—*Jane Yolen*

Puff

Lying, half awake, in bed,
Close those eyes and rest your head.

Cannot, will not, shall not, can't
Give in to sleep—so here's a chant.

See a candle, burning bright.
See the circle of its light.

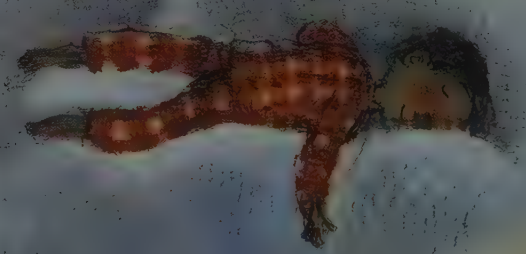
In that circle, you and me,
Those we love and family.

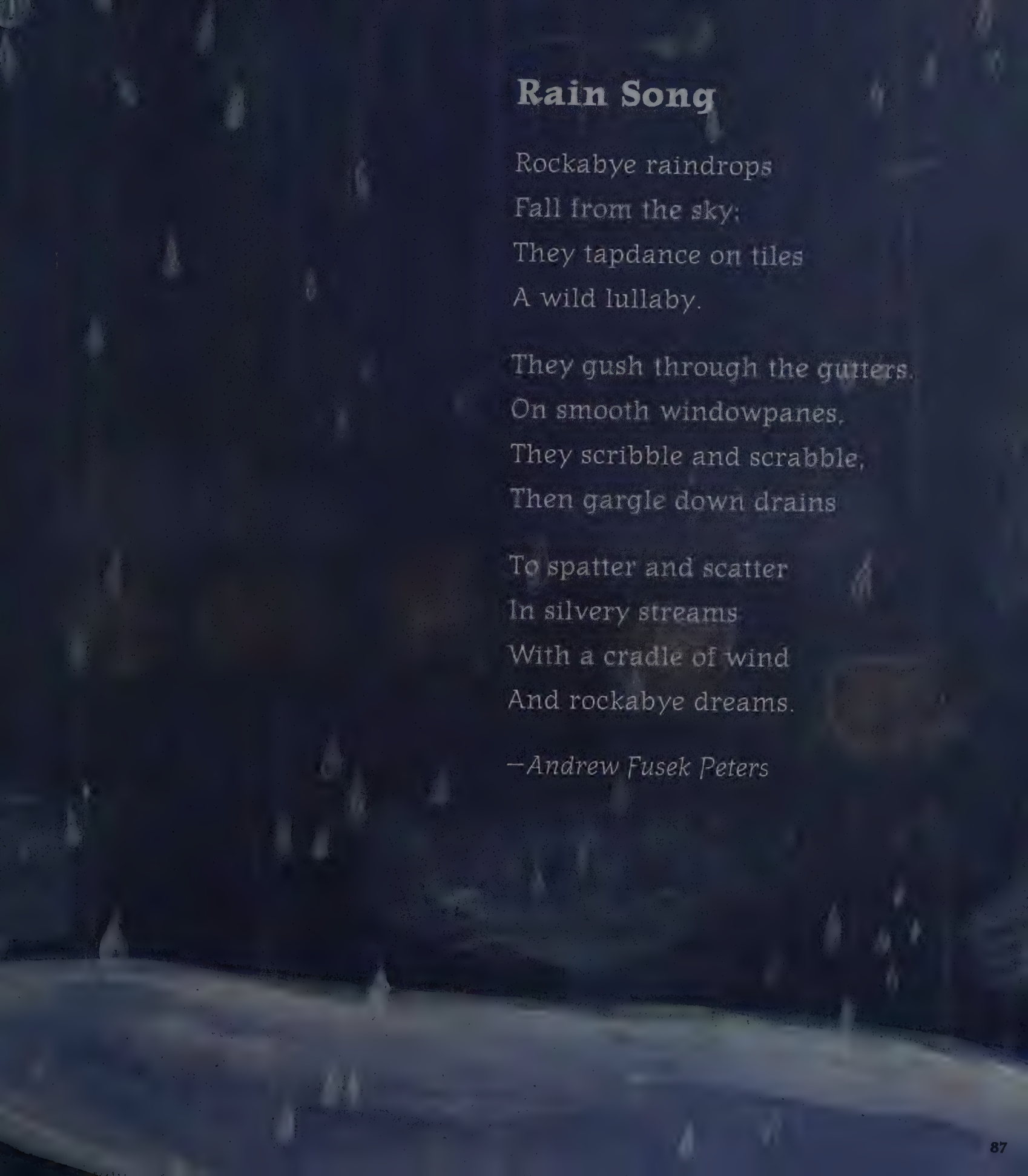
All together, join and say,
"Bad dreams! Puff! All blown away!"

May the circle of the light
Bring the brightest dreams tonight.

All is safe. Now drift away
On velvet dreams, from night to day.

—*Polly Peters*





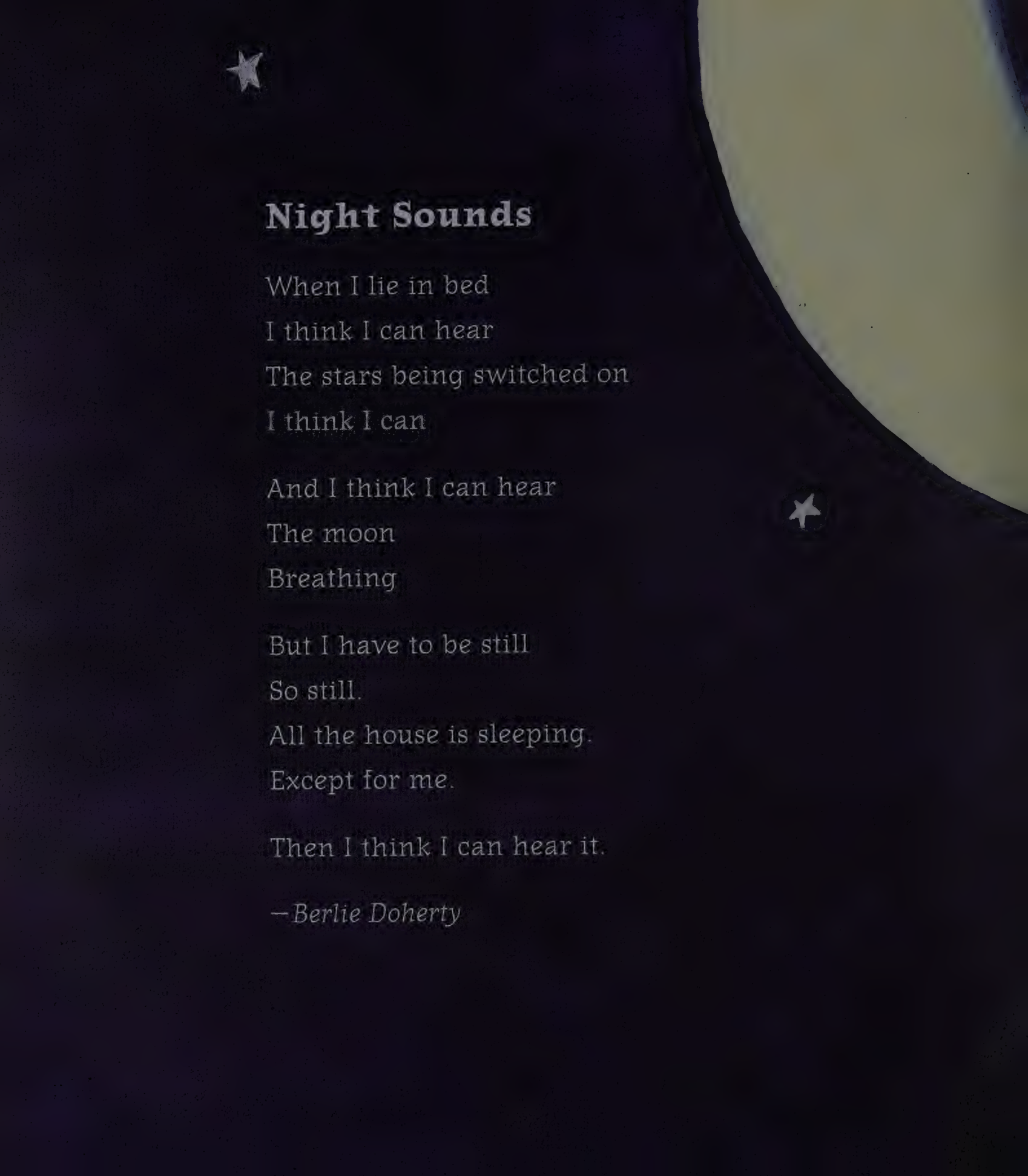
Rain Song

Rockabye raindrops
Fall from the sky;
They tapdance on tiles
A wild lullaby.

They gush through the gutters,
On smooth windowpanes,
They scribble and scrabble,
Then gargle down drains

To spatter and scatter
In silvery streams
With a cradle of wind
And rockabye dreams.

—*Andrew Fusek Peters*



Night Sounds

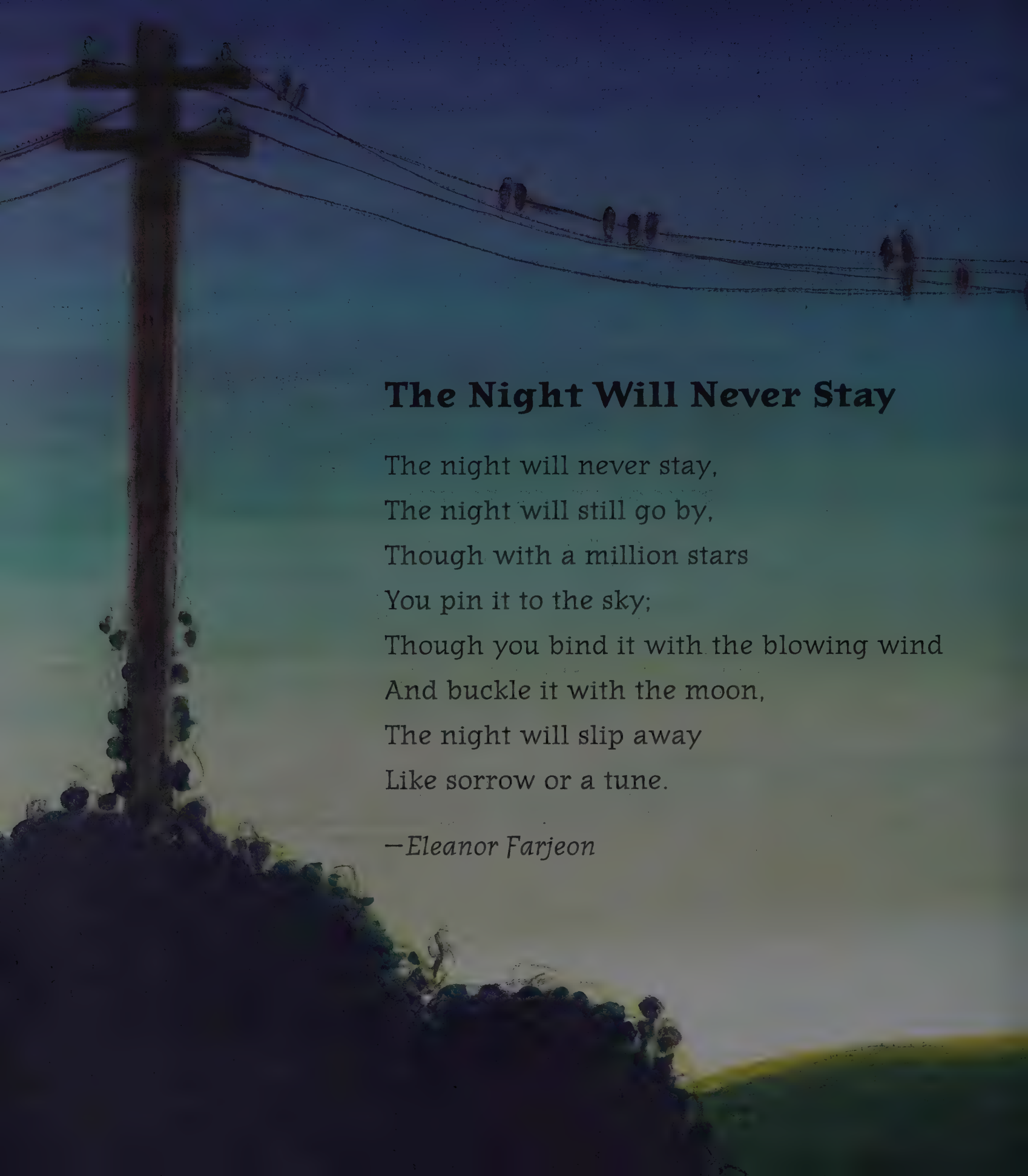
When I lie in bed
I think I can hear
The stars being switched on
I think I can

And I think I can hear
The moon
Breathing

But I have to be still
So still.
All the house is sleeping.
Except for me.

Then I think I can hear it.

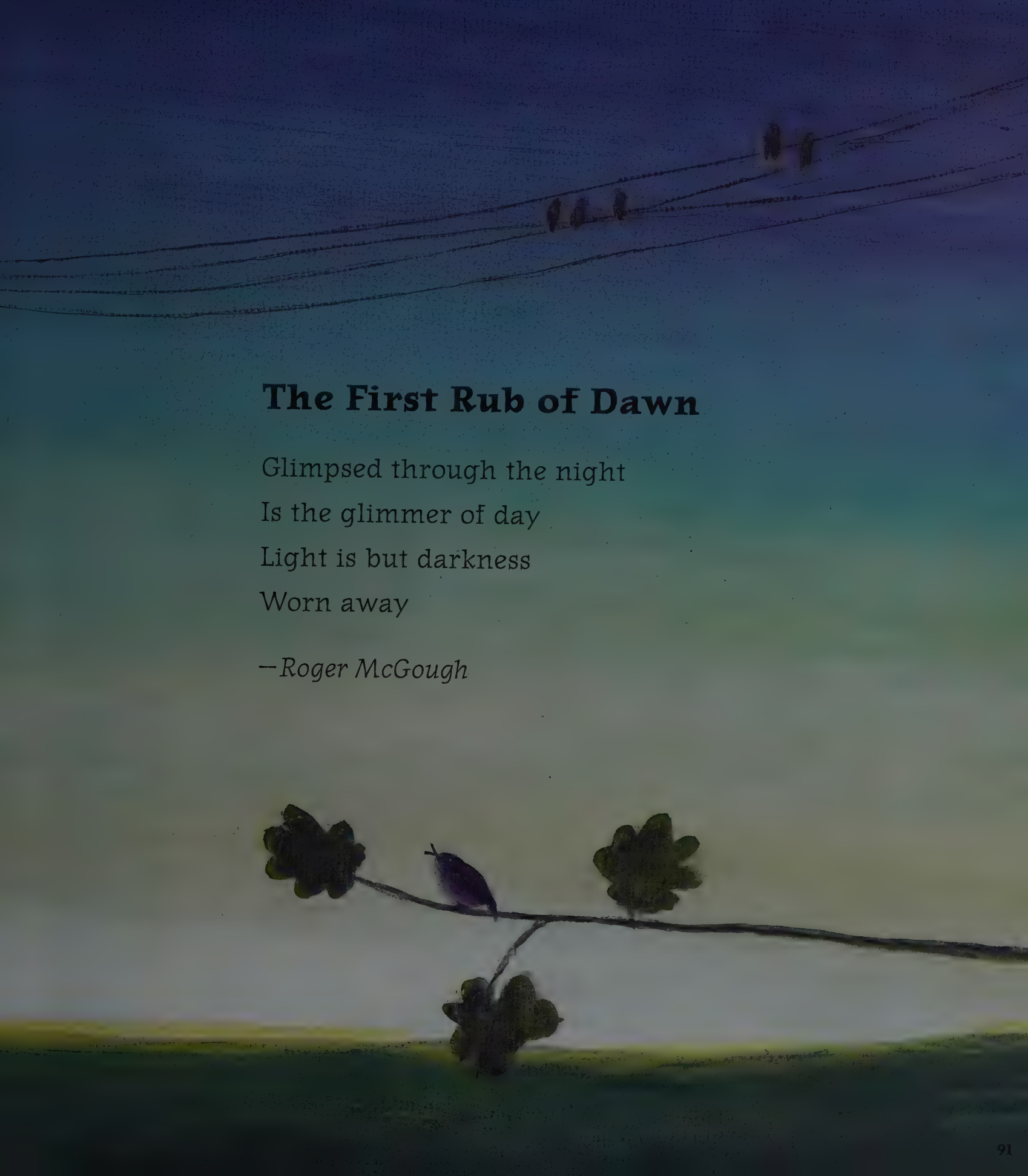
—Berlie Doherty



The Night Will Never Stay

The night will never stay,
The night will still go by,
Though with a million stars
You pin it to the sky;
Though you bind it with the blowing wind
And buckle it with the moon,
The night will slip away
Like sorrow or a tune.

—*Eleanor Farjeon*



The First Rub of Dawn

Glimpsed through the night
Is the glimmer of day
Light is but darkness
Worn away

—*Roger McGough*

☆ Index of First Lines ☆

And now the cozy day is gone 56
As cloak-black clouds 10
At night Mum snuggles me 33

Bring me all of your dreams 55

Come fluttering. 42

Dreams to sell, fine dreams to sell 54

Glimpsed through the night 91
Goodnight Mummy 38
Go to bed early 19
Go to bed, Tom 18

Here you lie. 72
How do dreams know 40
How strange that someone thinks it nice 11
Hush, foam mocker. 47

I like a yellow brush 28
I wonder at the stars by night 79
If you blow 27
In the absence of light 74
In the country 50
It's bedtime, it's rhymetime 34
I've brushed my teeth 22

Just when I'm ready to 23

Little brown baby-bird, lapped in your nest 52
Lying, half awake, in bed 84

Moon peeks over a distant hill 36
My bed is like a little boat 31
My name is Captain Soapsuds 25

O who cares much 35
Oak, ash, weeping willow 67
Oh, rock-a-by, baby mouse, rock-a-by, so! 44
One ewe 83

Rack-a-bye, baby. 59
Rock-a-bye, baby. 58
Rockabye raindrops 87

Scrub them, rub them 28
Sometimes it seems. 78
Sweet and low, sweet and low 48
Sydney 20

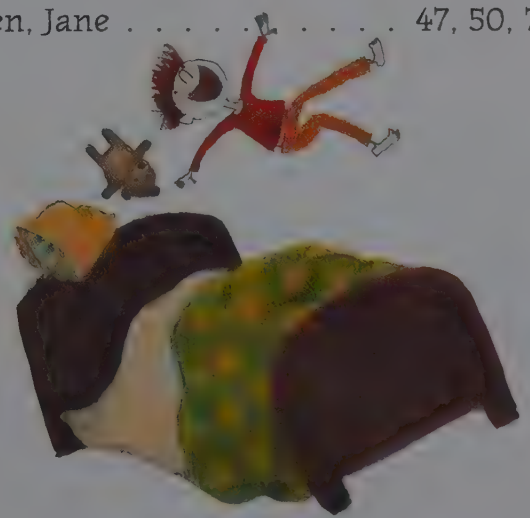
Teddy bear, Teddy Bear 37
The bat is as batty as can be 76
The hoot of an owl 71
The man in the moon 9
The Moon's the North Wind's cooky 12
The night will never stay. 90
The wind has fingers. *Knock! Knock! Knock!*. 60
Through the night 68
Tonight my puppy woke me up 45
Twinkle. 65
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. 15
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. 80

Under the dark is a star 62

When I lie in bed. 88
When I wake up and it is dark 73
When the bat's on the wing
and the bird's in the tree 17
When the sun has set 61
Wherever night falls 6
Who sings in the night? 70
Why can't I go to bed dirty? 26
Wordless words 66
Work done 32

☆ Index of Poets ☆

Agard, John 65
Aldis, Dorothy 23
Bogart, JoEllen 26
Churchill, George 54
Chute, Marchette 62, 73
Cotten, Cynthia 80
Cox, Palmer 44
Denton, Graham 10
Doherty, Berlie 88
Dotlich, Rebecca Kai 42
Farjeon, Eleanor 90
Flatt, Lizann 28
Florian, Douglas 76
Franco, Betsy 78
Guiterman, Arthur 17
Hoberman, Mary Ann 56
Hopkins, Lee Bennett 40
Hughes, Langston 55
Jacobs, Leland B. 61
Johnson, E. Pauline (Tekahionwake) . . . 52
Kent, Penny 33
Kuskin, Karla 66
Lindsay, Vachel 12
Magee, Wes 72
McGough, Roger 6, 32, 91
Mitton, Tony 27, 31
Mother Goose 9
Nicholls, Judith 22
Peters, Andrew Fusek 60, 79, 87
Peters, Polly 67, 84
Plath, Sylvia 35
Rice, John 34
Schertle, Alice 36
Scotellaro, Robert 25
Singer, Marilyn 11, 45
Stevens, Roger 38, 71
Taylor, Jane 15
Tennyson, Alfred, Lord 48
Townsend, Jill 20
Umansky, Kaye 28
Waddell, Philip 74
Walton, Rick 68
West, Colin 19
Yolen, Jane 47, 50, 70, 83



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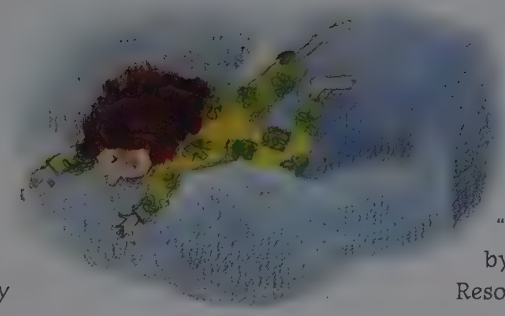

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For Olivia and Christian, sweet dreams!

G. B. K.

☆

For all the Stemple poetry lovers,
Who love to read between the covers,
And for the other poets—the Piatts—
For whom good poems make quiet riots

J. Y.

☆

This one is to Jai, only little now
but growing every day (and night)

A. F. P.

☆

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Jane Yolen is the author of 300 books for children and young adults, including the Caldecott-winning *Owl Moon* and the *New York Times* best-selling *How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night?* She also collected poems for *This Little Piggy and Other Rhymes to Sing and Play* and *Here's a Little Poem: A Very First Book of Poetry*, two volumes of poetry for the very young. Jane Yolen divides her time between Massachusetts and Scotland.

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